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O-CON
CULTURE

Social Security Hysteria, by Bob Kuttner

C. Vann Woodward: Racism • John Simon: Robert Lowell

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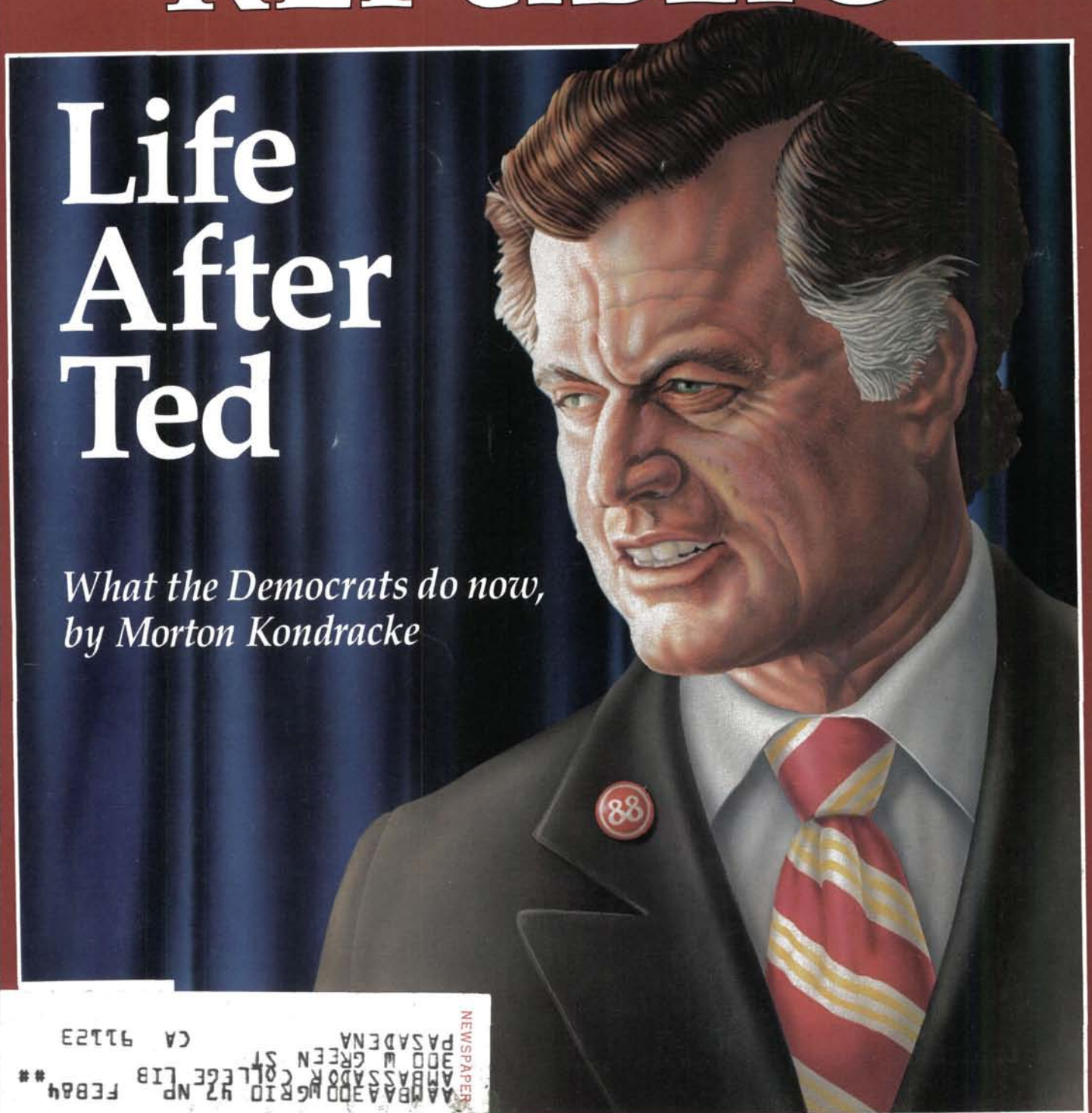

Life After Ted

What the Democrats do now, by Morton Kondracke

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CORRESPONDENCE

CENSORSHIP IN LEBANON

To the editors:

That the P.L.O. tried to keep American TV crews from videotaping military targets in Beirut confirms M.P.'s view ("Washington Diarist," TNR, November 15) that the Palestinians practiced censorship in Lebanon. And that Americans at home were denied an understanding of why the Israelis bombed and shelled civilian areas.

The reality is different. Palestinian commanders regularly waved off cameramen from photographing tanks parked under trees, ammunition dumps, and anti-aircraft positions. But such efforts were usually futile. Crews merely waited until an attack began or P.L.O. soldiers were distracted. Videotapes were then shipped to Damascus for satellite transmission. According to ABC News operations director Bob Murphy, who oversaw the coverage, the Syrians made virtually no effort to screen the footage, much less censor it.

As a result, American television viewers did see Palestinian gunners firing from the streets and gun emplacements at Israeli troops and airplanes.

As I pointed out in our "ABC News Viewpoint" account, not quoted in your November 15 issue, "The Palestinians had no way to censor reports and did not. The Israelis, with a satellite ground station, could and did." What troubled me about your mention of my ABC News report is that you quoted only the line that supported your premise.

JOHN MARTIN
ABC News
New York, New York

Martin Peretz replies:

Mr. Martin considers that if an Israeli government agency screens and actually cuts footage, that is censorship: if the P.L.O. prevents camera crews from photographing military targets in civilian areas it somehow is not censorship. But this P.L.O. practice was doubly effective since it was scarcely mentioned by the networks. To be precise it was mentioned only three times during the nearly three months of the war: on July 9 and 12 on CBS and on July 12 on ABC, and on all three occasions only in passing. As anyone who watched television during the fighting knows, American television viewers did not see many pictures of Palestinian weapons being fired from the midst of civilian life. No one claims that this was so because these weapons weren't there. The image of an anti-aircraft battery or a tank in an apartment complex would have undermined TV's favored characterizations of the Israeli attack. "Random artillery fire," "shelling indiscriminately," "terror bombs" is how some of Mr. Martin's ABC colleagues termed it. On June 28, one of them compared the siege of Beirut to World War II Stalingrad and Berlin. That is ignorant nonsense. He also said "Two square miles of West Beirut are now dust and mortar. The rest of the city, nearly all of it, resembles some ancient ruin." At the end of June that was a lie. It would have been a lie had it been asserted in the beginning of September.

BODY COUNTS

To the editors:

TRB writes of the new Vietnam memorial: "The controversial design follows a controversial war that cost almost fifty-eight thousand lives" ("What's In A Name," TNR, December 6). In fact, an estimated 2.5 million people were killed in North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia between 1960 and 1973. Of that sickening figure, 750,000 were civilians and only 58,000 were those American servicemen who knew they were going to kill, and perhaps die, half-way around the world.

PAUL L. MCGORRIAN
Hanover, New Hampshire

A VOICE FROM THE COCKPIT

To the editors:

How does Mark Crispin Miller ("How TV Covers War," TNR, November 29) know that the "mediating gadgets" of modern war "must blunt the sense of war in those who use them"?

How does he know that "elite technicians," "in a mood of perfect equilibrium and smug detachment," are "suspended in this state of artificial infancy"? Has he ever talked to an "elite technician"? Does he just stare off into space and imagine what Atari-for-keeps is like? Well, fine. Then he should say so, and confess his nonexistent research effort.

I hope I can qualify as at least a marginally "elite technician," because I fly "encased" in a 25-year-old B-52 designed before I was born. The BUFF, as we call it, is our best excuse for the "finest" right now.

If Mr. Miller wants to know what it is like to soar above the battle while "fingers do the warring," he should listen to some of the Linebacker II tapes from the twelve-day war over Hanoi in December 1972. There are guys in my wing with three trips up North, and they would have gladly told Mr. Miller what it is really like when the electronic warfare officer calls "SAM lock on," followed by the gunner's report of multiple SAM SA-2 exhausts headed your way.

I think I can speak fairly for the average crewmember. We know what those bombs do when they hit the target. If it came to it, we would go, and not with any infantile detachment.

For the record, I liked Mr. Miller's article, and, in fact, agreed with most of it. There does seem to be almost an inherent bias in the press against anybody bombing anything anywhere with any weapon for any reason. No act seems infamous enough to justify calling in the air support.

However, I'm willing to drop a load of "crowd-pleasers" not because I won't have seen the results up close or because I think flying is a low-risk assignment, but because I feel some things are worth dying for, even if it means the chance that I may take a crowd out with me.

KELLY HAGGAR
Grand Forks, North Dakota

AUTHOR'S QUERY

To the editors:

For an authorized biography of the American novelist, James Jones, to be published by Houghton Mifflin, I should like to hear from anyone who has letters, reminiscences, anecdotes, or other information about him.

FRANK MACSHANE
404 Dodge
Columbia University
New York, N.Y. 10027

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letter may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

The Power Of PACs

Big Business is running things again in Washington. It was in charge in the old days before the stock market crash in 1929, and then, for half a century or so, the political parties stepped back in and took over. Now the parties are losing influence again, and power is being taken over by the new tool, the Political Action Committee.

Mobil says this isn't so, or at any rate, if it is so, it is a good thing. In a recent advertisement it calls PACs "the voice of the real people." It says that critics of PACs are elitists: "PAC opponents really don't want the voices of average citizens to be amplified. Frankly, we're not only bored with such elitism, but outraged by the false characterization of business-organized Political Action Committees as spenders of shareholders' money to exert undue pressure on the workings of democratic government."

But as Mark Green recently pointed out in this journal ("Political Pac-Man," TNR, December 13), and as Elizabeth Drew confirms in a two-part article, in *The New Yorker*, PACs are indeed taking over. "Increasingly, the shape and nature of our politics is being determined by the interests that have the money to contribute and the technicians who instruct the candidates in how to raise it and use it," Miss Drew writes. "Increasingly, the question of who gets funds is a decision made within Washington, by people who have an eye on some piece of the national agenda."

This is a technical-sounding matter, hard for the average voter to focus on. The voter is finding politics increasingly dull anyway. Our awful two-year election process has now begun. In 1984 we will have thirty or so primaries to struggle through. For five straight Presidential elections the percentage of voters has gone down. In 1980 only 54 percent of the American public voted, as opposed to 75 percent in Canada. In Canada and in other parliamentary countries politics is more exciting. You see the prime minister and the leader of the minority party going after each other hammer and tongs, face to face. Here you can hear President Reagan give his weekly five-minute explanation of public affairs on radio. Unlike any parliamentary system, there is no provision to call an immediate election when the House defeats him on issues like the MX missile.

In its October 25 cover story, *Time* showed how the PACs work: "Today the power of PACs threatens to undermine America's system of representative democracy," it warned. Increasingly, big corporations or smaller interest groups band together to raise campaign funds, which they hand out to sympathetic politicians. In theory there's nothing wrong with that; it just separates the political parties from the legislators who do the voting. "There is a growing sense that the system is getting out of hand," says Missouri Democrat Richard Gephardt.

But let's let Mobil have its say. Its comment can be found, among other places, in a full-page advertisement in *The Economist*—perhaps an overflow of the oil company's account in the U.K. Mobile says the complaint against big business and big money using PACs "is patently spurious; it ignores two simple facts." (1) "Corporations are not by law permitted to fund PACs—employees do, voluntarily. . . ." (2) "No PAC—company or otherwise—may by federal law contribute more than $5,000 to any one Congressional candidate in a single election. That's hardly enough in these days of costly campaigns to 'buy' 30 seconds on TV, let alone an election." That reply by Mobil seems complete and conclusive. Actually, I think, it's silly.

Yes, agrees the *Time* article, a donor is legally limited to $5,000 (in both a candidate's primary and general election campaigns, for a total of $10,000). But PACs tend to run in packs and where one helps a friend, others do, too: "A candidate may raise half his war chest from these special-interest groups." The article cites Representative Thomas Luken, Democrat of Ohio, who sponsored numerous special-interest bills and raised some $100,000 from PACs.

As to the cozy Mobil theory that it's not the corporations putting up the funds, but "employees," I would like to quote a letter I got the other day from Dale Van Winkle, treasurer of United Technologies, who thanked me politely for my "contribution" of five dollars to the U.T.C. Political Action Committee of the company, of which I am a stockholder. "All of us have important interests in common," he said. "We can be most effective as a group by channeling our resources through the PAC to candidates who are supportive of those common interests."

Just so. Let Elizabeth Drew pick up the story. Acquisition of campaign funds has become "an obsession on the part of nearly every candidate for federal office," she says. "The obsession leads the candidates to solicit and accept money from those most able to provide it. . . . There are ostensible limits on how much can be contributed to the candidates for the House and the Senate, but these limits are essentially meaningless. The only limits are those on ingenuity." Yes, certainly, trade unionists have their PACs, too; in fact it was the unions that started the thing. But as the authority of political parties declined, other groups joined the fray, and the unions are far outdistanced now. Here's a case in point. The Federal Trade Commission issued a requirement that used-car dealers list known major defects of an automobile. Dealers didn't like it, and they were important: they had spent $675,000 in the 1980 campaign—they had bought "access." The House voted to kill the regulation; of the 286 members who voted against it, 242 had received money from the car dealers. Corruption? No; few disputes in Washington are settled on lofty moral grounds, but this is an ongoing process, and more and more the interest groups are intervening. It has led to the institutionalization of the Washington fundraiser. Congress finally voted to pay for Presidential campaigns, but not for Congressional campaigns. These are being increasingly centralized in Washington by the technicians and money men. Democracy is taking a strange turn.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
DECEMBER 27, 1982

FLYING DOWN TO RIO

The education of Ronald Reagan continues. Last week it took him on a field trip to Latin America. "Well, I learned a lot," the President cheerfully reported. "I didn't go down there with any plan for the Americas, or anything. I went down to find out from them and [learn] their views. You'd be surprised. They're all individual countries."

Well, it's a start. They are indeed all individual countries. In fact the justification for lumping them all into a single hemisphere of horrible political and economic conditions becomes less and less clear as the months go by. Recent developments in South America, for example, have somewhat blurred the authoritarian stereotype that has settled in the American mind. There has been good news from the individual countries. The authority of the military is flouted at the polls again and again. In October the first popularly elected government in eighteen years took office in Bolivia, the country that Che Guevara believed was the continent's best candidate for a Cuban solution. A populist president accepted the instruments of power from an army that two years ago had prevented him from taking office. Brazil followed suit. The first free elections in seventeen years returned a rude rebuke to the military, and an enthusiastic endorsement of President Figueiredo's policy of *abertura*, which means "opening" in Portuguese. In the state of Rio de Janeiro a man was elected governor whom the army used to cite as one of their reasons for the 1964 coup. After Brazil, Uruguay. In the first election since 1973 the people of Uruguay gave the opposition to the military government an overwhelming majority, and, according to *The Washington Post*, "forced the military to completely rethink its plans." And all the while in Argentina the regime of the generals is rapidly losing its legitimacy. Mass graves have been discovered that have placed their crimes in the forefront of popular consciousness, and the abject defeat in the Malvinas has eroded public confidence still more.

We do not mean to exaggerate the political ameliorations south of the border; James Madison would find much to be desired. Still, something is up. Among the countries that are experiencing these antiauthoritarian stirrings, President Reagan visited only Brazil. How happy he must have been not to have to lecture his hosts on human rights. The subjects discussed appear to have been mainly economic. A dramatic increase in American aid was offered, as well as American willingness to have a Brazilian astronaut join us in orbit. (The origins of this idea are hard to imagine. Maybe the President's staff was struck by the picture of outer space on the Brazilian flag.) Since he talked mainly about money, Mr. Reagan was a great success in Brazil. Business always brings him out. The plutocrats of Brazil were beside themselves, though they were quick to warn that a more intimate economic relationship with the United States did not mean a more intimate political relationship. There, as elsewhere, people do not like to be famous as our friends; we are paying the price for a century of paternalism.

The President may not have heard the little political parenthesis in Brazil, but on his next stop he heard it loud and clear. President Betancur of Colombia delivered a reprimand, which he called a toast, about the foreign policy of the United States in the Southern hemisphere. "Why shouldn't we do away with exclusions in the inter-American system?" he asked, referring to the anti-Sandinist activities of the United States. Mr. Betancur was referring, no doubt, to our secret war in Nicaragua, which is not exactly a secret. The President responded with a veiled allusion to "local insurgencies supported by outside countries which do not wish to see the republics of America succeed," and later he refused to confirm or deny that we've gone covert again. They turned next, if you'll pardon the expression, to cocaine.

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Having asked the Betancur government to crack down on the coke trade—80 percent of the drug used here comes from Colombia—the President left for Central America.

The news from Central America is not like the news from South America. Despite some political improvement in El Salvador, where the government has finally decided to unburden itself of Roberto d'Aubisson, and the United States has finally decided that its interests are not best represented by psychopaths, the savagery in Central America continues. And no place is more savage than Guatemala, whose Indian population is being wantonly massacred. President Reagan spoke sternly to President Magaña of El Salvador, but sweetly to President Rios Montt of Guatemala. His comments about the Guatemalan thug are a disgrace. "A bum rap," said Mr. Reagan when pressed about Mr. Rios Montt's ideas of public order; he is, said the President, "totally dedicated to democracy." This is simply delusional. It comes in tandem with a new request for military assistance to Guatemala that the Administration has put before Congress. (We suspended all such assistance to that state in 1977 for its gross violations of human rights.) This request includes a rather remarkable item—$250,000 with which to train Guatemalan officers not to hurt civilians. The State Department calls this Aesopian bit of aid "human rights training." Some things can't be taught, however, at least not to executioners. We worry that the idea might catch on. "Human rights training" for some of our Central American allies could leave our budget in ruins.

Ronald Reagan wants to keep Communism out of these tormented countries. So do we. But the only consequence of looking away from the likes of Rios Montt will be to make Communism look good to his victims. We will not beat the Soviets in the region by taking sides against its people. If we dedicate our political and economic resources to eliminating the social injustices that these people suffer, however, the Soviets in Central America don't stand a chance. It is the only kind of anti-Communism that will work. As President Betancur put it, "that's the way it is, Mr. President."

Trash Constrainer

The throwaway ethic is failing us, and we should hasten its end. The American addiction to the supposed virtues of product disposability is one for which we pay dearly. Our landscape is scarred with its inevitable by-product: trash. Not just the huge heaps where individuals, businesses, and local governments dump their refuse, but also that single broken bottle in the gutter, or, worse, in the front yard. These litter mountains and molehills are not only aesthetically insulting; they represent a tremendous waste of energy and raw materials.

Something can be done to reverse this trashing of America. Over the last ten years, nine states, ranging from traditional environmentalist strongholds like Vermont and Oregon to industrial giants like New York and Michigan, have passed "bottle bills," laws designed to encourage the recycling and refilling of beverage containers by making cans and bottles redeemable, usually at a value of five cents per container. Relying on the time-tested potency of economic incentive, these state laws have been extraordinarily effective, and there is every reason to believe that their success could be duplicated at the national level. Comprehensive deposit legislation would represent a welcome step out of our existing sloth.

Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon (the first state to pass a bottle bill) and Congressman William Jeffords of Vermont will be reintroducing a bill for a federal mandatory deposit law when the new Congress convenes, a proposal supported by such disparate groups as the League of Women Voters, the American Public Health Association, and the National Urban League. According to the General Accounting Office, a national bottle bill would reduce litter (dispersed garbage and trash) by 25 percent and solid waste (collected garbage and trash) by 4 percent. In states that have their own deposit laws, eight or nine out of every ten deposit containers are being returned. Michigan, which implemented its bottle law in 1978, reports highway litter down from 176 cans per mile to 27, ten of which come in from nondeposit states. Total litter rates have been cut in half in Oregon and by 90 percent in Connecticut's state parks, an indication that bottle bills have made citizens more conscious of an individual responsibility to help clean up in general. Less litter translates into lower clean-up costs for financially strapped municipal and county governments. New York City alone will save an estimated $30 million a year in waste collection and disposal costs when the state's law becomes effective in July.

A NATIONAL bottle bill would save energy and raw materials. A Wharton School of Business study concludes that it might conserve as much as 226 trillion B.T.U.s annually, the equivalent of 40 million barrels of oil (and many times the energy savings of the national 55 MPH speed limit). Demand for the bauxite used to make aluminum cans (of which more than 95 percent is imported) would be cut by more than a half million tons, enough to make six thousand Boeing 747s. Increased recycling would reduce air and water pollution in the beverage and container industry by more than half.

Despite the success of bottle bills at the state level, representatives of the industry and of beverage distributors and retailers have fought hard against federal legislation. Opponents say that bottle bills cost jobs. They are wrong. Although some skilled jobs are lost in container production, thousands more are created in the new handling networks needed to get used cans and bottles

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back from consumers and out on the market again as returnables. In Michigan, employment increased by 4,684 jobs as a result of deposit legislation; the G.A.O. estimates that national legislation would create 60,000 more. Opponents say that the laws cost consumers money. In some states, bottle bills do seem to have spurred higher beverage prices. It's not at all clear that they should have, or that a federal bill would do so: extra production and distribution costs should be offset by windfall profits on the unclaimed deposits of America's lazy and by the sale of surplus scrap material (not to mention energy savings). But even if beer and soda does end up costing slightly more, it seems a small price to pay for the enormous expected benefits. Opponents say that the deposit measures "inconvenience" the public. But nobody would be *forcing* beverage drinkers to return their used containers—only to realize the inconvenience they become to society as energy profligates and litterers.

IN SHORT, opponents are fighting a national bottle bill because it represents a change, one to which they would have to adapt structurally. Thus far, the container and beverage industries, working through such interest groups as the Glass Packaging Institute, the Can Manufacturers Institute, and the National Soft Drink Association, have successfully kept the Hatfield-Jeffords proposals at bay by stemming the tide toward more state deposit laws. They defeated referenda on the November ballot in four states, outspending bottle-bill supporters by ratios as high as 40 to 1. Media blitzes were enough to cloud the voters' choice: one TV ad showed a pregnant woman stumbling down a flight of stairs with an unwieldy bag of empty bottles; another, rats and roaches descending on a pile of cans awaiting collection.

But advocates of a national law remain optimistic. Considering the magnitude of mismatched spending, deposit referenda went down by surprisingly slim margins. (In California, where bottle-bill detractors outspent the "Yes" campaign by $6 million to $800,000, 44 percent voted in favor of a deposit law.) Efforts to repeal laws in Maine and Massachusetts have failed miserably. Some industry representatives, including the Adolph Coors brewing company, now favor federal legislation, recognizing the long-term advantages of standardization. Most state bottle bills require unique container markings indicating refund value and the state of sale, a nuisance to beverage and container producers. With several grass-roots state coalitions now in a position to push bills through state legislatures, proponents hope to turn this nuisance to their advantage, convincing industry to back the proposed federal measures—if only out of self-interest.

Critics of the bottle-bill complain that deposit legislation presents only a piecemeal solution to the litter problem, that they are being singled out unfairly for government regulation. "What are you going to do next?" asks one spokesman for the Glass Packaging Institute. "Require a deposit on newspapers and magazines?" Indeed, this may be an idea worth pursuing. But in the meantime, the national bottle bill is surely something upon which we can all agree. Americans use more than a hundred billion carbonated beverage containers a year. Delay will only leave us further mired in our present mess.

Bloodied And Bowed

"One could never have supposed that, after passing through so many trials, after being schooled by contemporary skepticism, we had so much left in our souls to be destroyed." Alexander Herzen wrote those melancholy words about 1848, when he witnessed the revolution in Paris crushed by General Cavaignac. Since then there have been many more trials to pass through. The Russian Revolution crushed itself, and later crushed the revolution in Budapest, and later the revolution in Prague. Now it has crushed the revolution in Warsaw. A liberal of the nineteenth century could not have imagined the skepticism that would afflict a liberal of the twentieth century. He could not have imagined that, so many disappointments later, there would still be so much left in the liberal soul to be destroyed. But there is, and General Jaruzelski is destroying it.

It is premature to write the obituary for Solidarity. Lech Walesa has been released from the "hunting lodge," the political and economic conditions that gave rise to Solidarity remain, and it is hard to put down millions of people. But it is not impossible. This is the terrible truth that Solidarity's supporters must now acknowledge. "We must win, since there is no other alternative," said Walesa when he came home. He may be wrong. There is no law of history according to which popular movements for justice must win. Solidarity has suffered one blow after another; it is bloodied and a little bowed. The time has come to disabuse ourselves of an undespairing attitude. It is no longer appropriate.

Of course the situation in Poland appears to be returning to "normal." Martial law will almost certainly be lifted soon, perhaps as early as December 13, the first anniversary of its imposition. But it will be lifted only because its work is done. The "normality" to which Poland is returning is the stifling (really the restifling) of a society. The Polish junta has successfully hurled Poland backward through time, to a state without political freedoms and economic changes and social reforms. Poland is once again a bound and gagged captive of the Soviet Union. The only difference is that a dream has become a memory, which is a special sort of hardship. The morale of the Poles looks low. Judging by the failure of Solidarity's recent efforts, particularly of the strike it called in November, the Jaruzelski regime has succeeded

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in cowing a large part of the population. Through a combination of police action and economic intimidation, it has left the workers of Poland sullen and afraid. The Polish novelist Kazimierz Brandys, who is an exile in New York, has written compassionately of such a condition: "I have learned not to hold people's fear in contempt, but to view it as a form of suffering that deserves respect."

THE SLOW DYING of Solidarity arouses sorrow, but it also arouses anger. Solidarity was not wounded only by Jaruzelski and the pro-Soviet satrapy in Warsaw. History will call others to account as well. The Polish church, for example, which went with the workers when the going was good, and then cut and ran. Archbishop Jozef Glemp decided not to support Solidarity's November strike call, which was to be a test of its strength, and Church officials have told reporters privately that, as *The Economist* put it, "Solidarity's underground leadership has no program." A constructive criticism, that. Then the Archbishop announced that Pope John Paul II will be allowed to visit Poland in June, but only if Poland remains calm. It must seem like a fair trade to him, democracy for a blessing. Perhaps it seems like a fair trade to his countrymen as well, in which case Marx will have been right about something. Religion, it may be, is the opiate of the Polish people.

The West too will have something to answer for. When the leaders of the European Economic Community recently listed their conditions for the improvement of East-West relations—there were not many—Poland was no longer among them. The West's error, in brief, was that it allowed its foreign policy to be determined by its economic institutions. The bankers want a calm Poland as devoutly as the bishop does. Some of them believe that there is a direct correlation between tyranny and economic productivity, as if Jaruzelski has made Poland any more capable of paying its debt than it was before. Some of them simply want to avoid the professional humiliation of Poland's default. They know they made their loans without reason, and that Polish (and Soviet) planners played them for fools. The loans provided to Poland made possible economic exploitation of a classically colonial kind; Polish industry was pressed into the service of Soviet foreign policy at the price of Polish solvency. And the refusal of the lenders to face the consequences of their foolishness has made them complicit in the suppression of Solidarity, and the restoration of the Polish workers to a state of servility.

Reasons to be cheerful? We note that Mr. Walesa has sworn to be "faithful to August" and that the authorities suddenly canceled the interview he taped after his release. We note the persistence of an underground press, now truly underground once more, fragmented and intermittent but far from dead. We note the obstinacy of the actors union, whose boycott of Polish television since last year's coup has forced the government to outlaw it. And we note the dissension within the Polish church. The country's eighty bishops issued a statement denouncing the banning of Solidarity and affirming the right of the workers to form free trade unions. This pastoral letter can only be interpreted as a challenge to the accommodationist course chosen by Archbishop Glemp (who is now advising the actors to go back to work).

In the absence of Western willingness to demonstrate its displeasure with Jaruzelski in ways that hurt, all it could offer the Poles was sentiment. We speechified. We exhorted the new democrats in the heart of totalitarianism to take heart. Solidarity forever. Now we can barely make the speeches anymore. Solidarity may not be forever. For the time being, and maybe for a long time to come, the enemies of freedom have won. We still stand with Walesa, and the thinning resistance, and the workers and intellectuals in the "detention centers." But our hearts are broken.

NOTEBOOK

□ BOB KUTTNER, whose article on the Social Security "crisis" begins on page 17 of this issue, has become a contributing editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC. Mr. Kuttner spent the last three years as editor of *Working Papers* magazine. He was one of the founders of *More*, the journalism review, and has been, among other things, a national reporter for *The Washington Post* and chief investigator for the Senate Banking Committee. His book about the antitax uprising, *Revolt of the Haves*, was published by Simon and Schuster in 1980.

□ JUST AS LAST WEEK'S TNR rolled off the presses with an article explaining why Congress shouldn't stop the Federal Trade Commission from prosecuting doctors who engage in illegal business practices (See "Doctors' Orders" by Jason DeParle, TNR, December 20), the House bowed to pressure from the American Medical Association and passed the doctors' exemption—otherwise known as the Luken-Lee amendment—245 to 155. The exemption proposes to reduce competition, drive up the cost of health care, and open the medical marketplace to such unsavory practices as price-fixing and illegal boycotts. In fact, the bill has little going for it, except the backing of the A.M.A.—which seems to be enough. (During the last election the A.M.A.'s PAC was unsurpassed in campaign donations.) But the exemption still has to pass the Senate, and with time running out in the lame duck session, it is unlikely to reach the floor. In that case the bill will die a natural death—for the moment. We hope the next Congress will have sense enough to spot the exemption for what it is: state-of-the-art special interest legislation.

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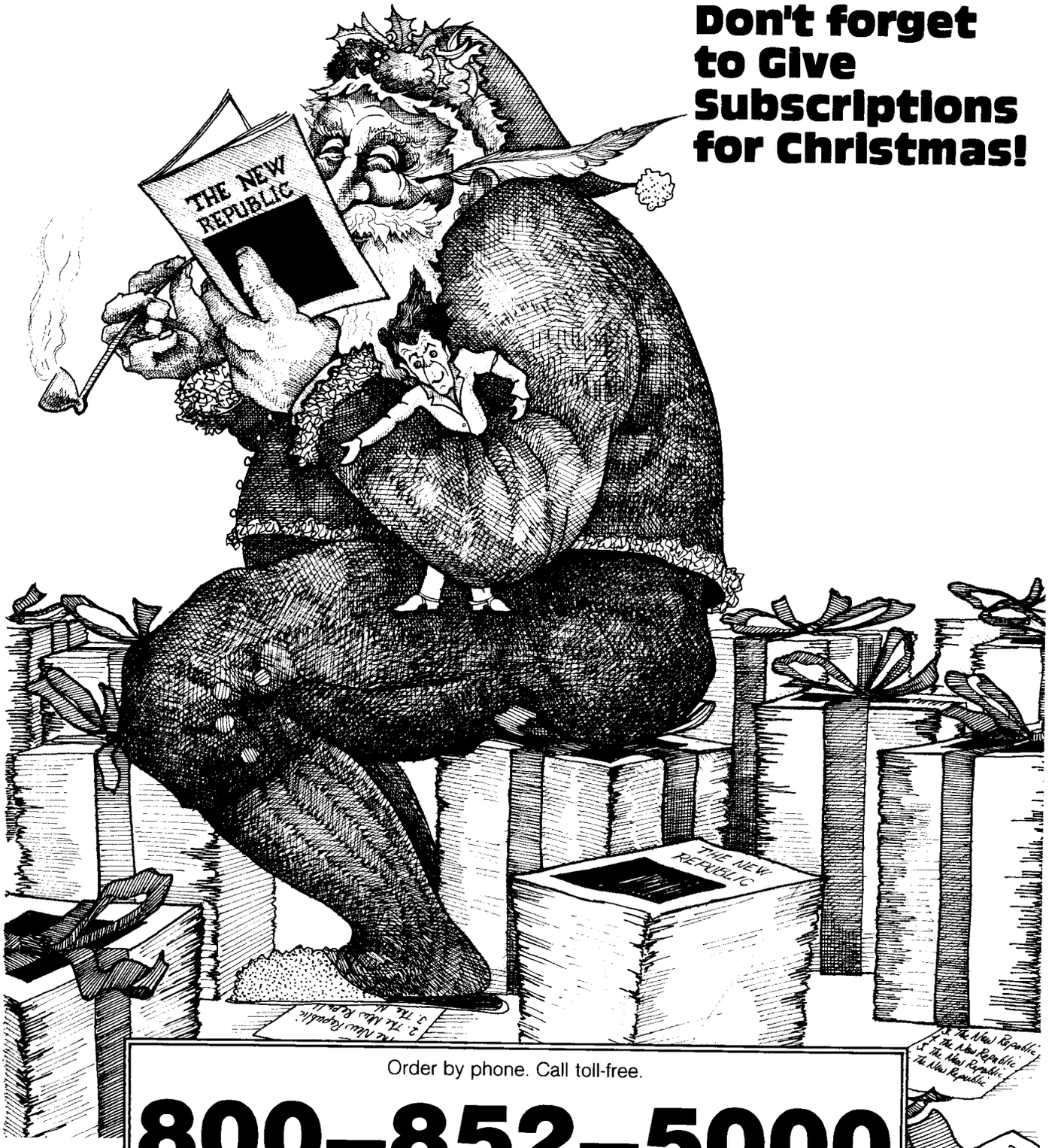

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□ WHEN THE MX WAS PROPOSED, an entire city lost its senses. The city was not Washington, where skepticism ruled; it was Cheyenne. The Wyoming town was chosen to house all one hundred of America's most nuclear weapons, and it was thrilled. "I think the MX is going to be great for Cheyenne," said the Mayor. "After all, the military has had a hundred-year relationship with the town, back to the days of the cavalry and old Fort Carlin. I think it's great." But it was not just patriotism that stirred the mayor. It was jobs—eight thousand of them, and hundreds of millions of dollars for the construction and maintenance of the dreaded projectiles. Deterrence was to save Cheyenne from the recession. Well, something else will have to save Cheyenne now. We congratulate the citizens of the city upon their escape from ground zero. Now they can calm down and contemplate what they were asked to bear. The Russians were being invited to attack Cheyenne first, and the Russians aren't the Indians.

□ ACCORDING TO Professor Jerry Hough of Duke University, the rise of Yuri Andropov augurs well for international peace. Why? Well, for one thing, says Mr. Hough in a November 16 article in *Newsday*, Mr. Andropov "has been the Politburo's most forceful public spokesman for detente." Why Mr. Andropov's praise for the Soviet version of detente should be any more significant than, say, that of his predecessor, escapes us. Or take Mr. Hough's comments on Mr. Andropov's tenure at the K.G.B. Mr. Andropov "naturally has spoken out against ideological subversion," writes Mr. Hough in a recent issue of *Problems of Communism*—but not, he adds significantly, "in his two most recent speeches." Some consolation. But then, Mr. Hough's views on the K.G.B. have long verged on the bizarre. In his *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (1979), he said that while the K.G.B. is not above engaging in some nasty practices, it also places "great emphasis on its educational role." As evidence, he refers to the "repeated visits" paid by K.G.B. agents to known dissidents, "visits in which the agents attempt to persuade them that they are mistaken, and that their speech has unhealthy consequences." Some education. Mr. Hough is greatly esteemed as one of America's most distinguished Sovietologists. But with such Sovietologists, who needs the Soviets?

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "We have no desire, Heaven knows, to make anyone needlessly gloomy at this season of holiday cheer; and we suggest that any reader who feels that things are just fine and dandy should skip this paragraph. For ourselves, we must admit that as we survey the state of affairs, we shouldn't be at all surprised if Santa Claus, after a similar survey, were to turn around, go back to the North Pole, lock himself into his workshop and indulge in a good cry. For who can be merry in a world like this?" ("The Week," December 28, 1932.)

The ultimate basing mode.

DENSE UNPACKING

LAST WEEK'S vote in the House of Representatives rejecting the "Dense Pack" basing mode for the MX missile raises at least two embarrassing questions. First, did "Dense Pack" refer to a basing mode or to the group of people who designed it? And second, where did the idea come from, anyway?

Understanding MX missile-basing strategy begins with the maxim, "ontogeny recapitulates domestic policy." Put simply, once a President has found a way of positioning himself on domestic issues so as to frustrate surprise attack by his critics, he begins positioning MX missiles in a similar pattern. Thus, when critics attempted to pin down the Carter Administration on domestic policy, they found that the experience resembled nailing Jell-O to the wall: every time a critic took aim at President Carter's position on a given issue, that position would change, sometimes in a matter of hours. It came as no surprise, therefore, when the Carter Administration recommended the "shell game" or "racetrack" basing mode for the MX missile, in which a Soviet attack on an MX missile, once aimed, would be frustrated by moving the missile to another silo.

The same basing mode initially proved attractive to the Reagan Administration because of similarities between its domestic policies and a giant shell game. Yet the rejection of the Carter "racetrack" mode by President Reagan was inevitable. Unlike President Carter, President Reagan does not frustrate his critics by constantly changing his position. Indeed, he only clings more tenaciously to a position the more wrong-headed it proves to be. The Reagan Administration thwarts its critics by densely packing as many poor ideas around a given policy position as possible, in hopes that an attack on any one idea will be interfered with by attacks on other ideas placed alongside it. For example, in order to deter attacks on the bad idea of a July 1983 tax cut, the Administration simply deployed three worse ideas—moving the tax cut up to January, taxing unemployment benefits, and lowering the minimum wage. The resulting political fratricide totally obliterated all three ideas, along with the attacks on them, while leaving the original idea unharmed.

Dense Pack was to have been a turning point in strategic economics. Thanks in large part to the Reagan Administration, our economy is not the prize it once was, but at present rates it will be at least another ten years until the U.S. is no longer worth the trouble to conquer. It is for this reason that the next decade presents a "window of vulnerability," when we still have something the Soviets want. As the unemployment and bankruptcy rates show, much is being done. But something more may be needed. An expenditure of

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$30 billion on a missile system might have been just enough to sap what little vitality is left in the nation's economy. But now that Dense Pack has been bagged, the President has a problem. He may have no choice but to move to the ultimate MX missile-basing mode: turning the system *inward* and retargeting it on whatever parts of the economy prove resistant to the destructive impact of his economic policies.

IRA NERKEN

Ira Nerken is a Washington political consultant.

In Moscow, the wages of waging peace.

UNLICENSED DOVES

THE UNOFFICIAL Group to Establish Trust Between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. has sixteen members in Moscow. It would appear to offer no threat to the official Soviet antiwar organization, the Committee for the Defense of Peace, which claims 41 million members and aims its protests exclusively at Washington. Its goals of reversing the nuclear arms race tally with those professed by the government, and its tactics, seeking to establish direct contacts between the Soviet and American people, might be termed idealistic but scarcely subversive. Yet the independent group's appeals for disarmament have exposed its members to arrest, exile, and, in one case, internment in a mental hospital. Their offense, of course, was being part of a group not licensed by the authorities, especially one implying criticism, however oblique, of the Soviet status quo.

As Leonid Brezhnev's health declined, the K.G.B. appeared increasingly determined to crush the last remnants of public dissent. The Moscow Helsinki Watch, faced with the arrest of one of its last three members still at liberty, the 75-year-old lawyer Sofia Kallistratova, announced its dissolution on September 8. The Politburo, led by Yuri Andropov, seems to have decided that no such discordant voices would be allowed to mar the chorus of approbation accompanying the changing of the Kremlin guard. Like the members of the tiny peace group, the human rights activists addressed their messages to a Western audience, reason enough for the K.G.B. to classify them as foreign agents.

When Western peace groups protested the harassment of the Moscow doves, they received lengthy denials from Yuri Zhukov, head of the Committee for the Defense of Peace, that the activists had been arrested for their antiwar campaign. Any legal sanctions, Zhukov contended, had been directed against "hooligans" who had committed a "flagrant breach of peace." But all such "crimes" were discovered shortly after the independent peace group unveiled its program during a press conference at a Moscow apartment on June 4. On that occasion, the eleven original organizers announced the formation of the group and its aim: "Lowering the danger of nuclear war without prejudice to the interests either of the Soviet Union or of the U.S.A." To establish the requisite degree of trust and understanding, they proposed a "four-sided dialogue," involving ordinary citizens as well as government leaders in such things as cultural and medical exchanges and a pen-pal network. They also discussed "a joint program of peace education, compulsory in Soviet and American schools and textbooks," regular cooperation on space missions, and "open discussions between representatives of the two governments" on a call-in TV show. Their idealism—and political naiveté—came out most clearly in their proposal to exchange the children of the leaders of the two countries, on the premise that the heads of state would be loath to dispatch missiles if they knew their own children were going to be killed.

Within the week, the 25-year-old artist Sergei Batovrin, at whose apartment the press conference had been held, was summoned by the police. By June 12 all the remaining members of the group had been taken to militia or procurators' offices and warned that their activities had been deemed "provocative, antisocial, and illegal." They were threatened with criminal prosecution on various charges. When they returned home, they found their phones disconnected and themselves under house arrest. In July two members of the group were imprisoned for fifteen days to keep them from making contact with a Scandinavian delegation that was participating in officially approved peace marches. Four had their apartments searched and their papers seized, others were exiled from Moscow, and the rest were barred from further meetings with foreign correspondents.

Still, the group persisted in its attempt to conduct its work and to demonstrate that it was not an "anti-Soviet" movement. On June 14 it asked the Moscow city government to register it as a public organization and to allow it to demonstrate for disarmament on June 27. Both requests were ignored. It made further proposals, including an appeal to the Soviet and U.S. governments to cease nuclear testing and to have Moscow declared a nuclear-free zone. It even managed to gather five hundred signatures on petitions to support its aims; the signers were harassed in their turn.

On August 6, the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, the group gathered at the apartment of Yuri Medvedkov, a geography professor, to view an exhibit of eighty-eight paintings by Batovrin on antiwar themes. Moments before foreign correspondents were supposed to arrive, accompanied by members of an American peace delegation, K.G.B. men broke in to confiscate the paintings. Then they arrested Batovrin on a charge of "evading military service," and took him to Moscow Psychiatric Hospital No. 14, on Bekhtereva Street.

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Richard Deats, executive secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, was among the U.S. visitors who learned from Batovrin's wife, Natalya, that Batovrin had been threatened with arrest for currency speculation unless he renounced his membership in the group and condemned U.S. foreign policy. She said he had been exempted from military service in 1975 on grounds of mental illness after he had participated in an unauthorized outdoor art show the police had leveled with bulldozers. After his Pop-style paintings were denied official recognition, he repeatedly applied for permission to emigrate with his wife and infant daughter.

Though Batovrin seemed to have a defense against the draft evasion charge, he now found himself not in court but on a mental ward, where he was dosed four times a day with aminazin, a neuroleptic drug akin to Thorazine, and threatened with electric shock treatments. He was diagnosed as suffering from "sluggish schizophrenia," a malady Soviet psychiatrists often detect, on the basis of such symptoms as "reformist delusions" and "metaphysical intoxication," in persons who show no outward signs of maladjustment.

An American posed as a relative of Batovrin to visit him in the hospital. She reported that his only "treatment" consisted of pills he was forced to swallow. During the brief time she was allowed with him, they discussed peace movement strategy in hurried whispers. The nurse who had permitted the visit refused to let Batovrin keep the flower the visitor had brought, because inmates are not allowed to keep any sharp instruments, and the single rose had thorns.

ON September 2, two Cornell University physicists, Kurt Gottfried and Nobel laureate Hans A. Bethe, drafted a letter to President Brezhnev expressing their dismay "that the Soviet government has chosen to harass and persecute" the tiny band of Moscow activists. They argued that "the double standard by which the Soviet government abides—applauding widespread public debate in the West, while crushing the most benign form of free expression at home—only strengthens the complex of forces that impel the nuclear arms race." Their call for an end to the group's persecution, particularly for the release of Batovrin, was signed by eighteen other prominent U.S. scientists and leaders of antiwar groups, including Herbert Scoville, president of the Arms Control Association; Morton H. Halperin, of the Center for National Security Studies; Robert F. Drinan, president of Americans for Democratic Action; Jerome B. Wiesner, former president of M.I.T.; Randall Kehler, national coordinator of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze; and Dr. Helen Caldicott, president of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

The appeal seemed to mark a departure for leaders of the U.S. disarmament movement, who had previously directed their efforts primarily at the Reagan Administration, not the Kremlin. But, as Dr. Bethe commented, "The Union of Concerned Scientists has always wanted arms reductions in both countries. We have always been against unilateral disarmament." When asked why the appeal had singled out Batovrin, an artist, Bethe replied, "We want to support all people, not just scientists." A coalition of peace organizations, including the American Helsinki Watch Group, the American Friends Service Committee, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, is planning to address a joint statement of support for the dissident Soviet group to Andropov on January 1.

The Bethe appeal seems to have been remarkably successful. On September 9 Reuters reported that Batovrin had been released, henceforth to be treated as an outpatient. Aryeh Neier, spokesperson for the New York-based public interest group Helsinki Watch, is convinced that the efforts of Bethe and Gottfried were decisive, for "past experience demonstrates that Western scientists have the greatest clout with the Soviets." The continued detention of Batovrin, in Neier's opinion, must have been seen by the authorities as a threat to disarmament talks with the U.S., as well as to the prized scientific exchanges with the West. The only group that might have had more impact on the Kremlin than scientists of the stature of the letter's signers, Neier thinks, would have been a group of American bankers.

If the Soviet authorities thought that the month-long psychiatric detention of Batovrin would frighten the peace group into silence, they were soon proved wrong. Even the recent arrest of yet another member, the linguist Oleg Radzinsky, did not paralyze the Moscow doves. The unlicensed peace activists announced a news conference for foreign correspondents on November 1. But Batovrin and his wife were locked in their apartment, two members were intercepted by the police, and two others who did arrive were pushed back by plainclothesmen, who ordered the reporters to leave.

Under the leadership of Andropov, which combines the forces of the police and army with those of the Party, the life of the Soviet doves is not going to get any easier—nor will the life of other dissidents. But none of the dissidents seem ready to settle for a future bounded by proclamations of nuclear might and promises of material rewards. Their resolve, as shown by the ongoing hunger strike of Anatoly Scharansky, continues to animate the peace group members, Jewish refuseniks, and other unintimidated spirits, despite the unequal odds in their confrontation with one and a half million officials, agents, and informers of the K.G.B. The vitality of Soviet dissent depends primarily on domestic factors, but foreign support, such as the action planned by Western peace groups on New Year's Day, can give heart to the few activists who still dare to speak out.

HARVEY & BRYNA FIRESIDE

Harvey Fireside teaches politics at Ithaca College and is the author of *Soviet Psychoprisons* (Norton). Bryna Fireside is a freelance writer and book reviewer.

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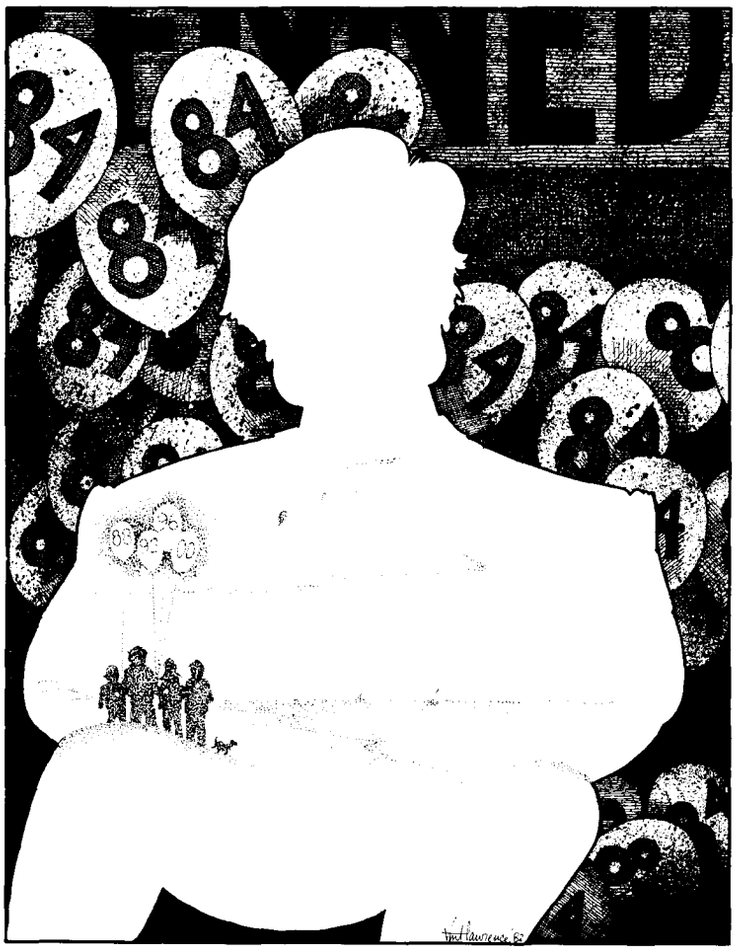
The powers to be in Campaign '84.

THE DEMOCRATS AFTER TED

BY MORTON KONDRACKE

DOES IT SEEM awfully early for people to be running for President, or, as Edward Kennedy did the other day, deciding not to run? It may seem that way, but it isn't. George McGovern announced his 1972 candidacy on January 18, 1971. Jimmy Carter formally entered the 1976 race on December 12, 1974. And Philip Crane, for all the good it did him, announced his candidacy for the 1980 Republican nomination on August 2, 1978. It is true, though, that the 1984 Democratic candidates are much further along in their planning and organizing than Presidential contenders have been in previous years. Senator Gary Hart has hired Bill Romjue, President Carter's Iowa campaign director in 1976 and 1980, to begin organizing for Iowa's party caucuses, which will occur on February 27, 1984. Senator John Glenn has signed a lease for 5,000 square feet of office space in a building at 444 North Capitol Street in Washington. Former Vice President Walter Mondale has rented a vacant office building on Wisconsin Avenue above Georgetown, is deciding who will fit where in his campaign organization, and is expected to announce his candidacy formally during the first three months of next year.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

According to aides to Hart, Kennedy, and Mondale, the candidates this year are six to eight months ahead of the planning schedules of past election years, and they all agree about why this is so. Federal election laws state that as of January 1, 1983, money raised for a Presidential campaign or exploratory committee will be matched by public funds. To be out of the gate and ready to begin fundraising at maximum speed at the start of next year, candidates have to get ready this year. Part of getting ready is looking for and signing up the best political and fundraising talent available, finding supporters in the primary states, gathering intelligence about local issues, and scouting the opposition. In each election cycle, this process gets started earlier than in the one before.

Now that Kennedy is out of the race, some of his strategists are willing to talk about just how extensively organized his campaign was. What they say provides a gauge with which to judge how far things have moved in other campaigns, where officials are understandably reluctant to reveal too much. What Kennedy's aides say reinforces his claim that it was "family considerations" —not political ones— that caused him to withdraw. Someone might have ended up beating Kennedy, but at the time he decided not to run, there was every reason for him to think he could win. Polls in New Hampshire indicated that television advertising could suppress the "character issue" in primary states, and although top party professionals (reportedly including Massachusetts's own Tip O'Neill) feared that Kennedy couldn't win a general election battle against President Reagan or some other Republican, he would have started the race with a long lead among Democrats. The

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last national poll on the subject, a Gallup poll in August, showed Kennedy with 43 percent support, Mondale with 13 percent, Glenn with 7 percent, and others with less than 2 percent. This time, unlike 1980, Kennedy was planning to start early and hit hard to hold his lead.

The Kennedy strategy was to try for an early knockout in the first caucuses and primaries. In Iowa he had convinced former senator and governor Harold Hughes to switch his support from Senator Alan Cranston and to become one of his national co-chairmen. Kennedy was scheduled to make an unannounced trip to Iowa next spring, and to travel around by car with Hughes, talking to potential supporters for two days, before the national press realized what was happening and descended on the state. Kennedy was then to head back to Washington, and once the press had left Iowa, return for another tour with Hughes. Although Kennedy took a drubbing in Iowa in 1980, he had a solid base of 35,000 out of the 100,000 or so persons who show up for caucuses—35,000 who stood with Kennedy even though Carter was charging that support for Kennedy would be interpreted in Iran as undermining American resolve.

KENNEDY'S POSITION was strong in New Hampshire, whose primary comes on March 6. A victory there might tend to be discounted, as it would in Massachusetts the following week. But the Kennedy camp hoped to startle the press and the party with unexpected showings in a group of Southern primaries on March 13. Private polls reportedly showed Kennedy leading in Florida, especially among Jews, Hispanics, and blacks in south Florida. Kennedy strategists also thought they had a chance at winning the Alabama primary. As reported by Tom Oliphant in the December 5 *Boston Globe*, Kennedy strategists were planning an effort to win an endorsement from George Wallace. They had hopes for a surprise showing in South Carolina, too, because its Democratic national committeeman, Don Fowler, was to be another national co-chairman. Most of all, though, Kennedy was counting on the votes of blacks, who were shown in polls as favoring Kennedy by margins of 8 and 9 to 1. Kennedy was clobbered by Carter in the 1980 Illinois primary, but his strategists had hopes of winning in 1984 because state chairman Phil Rock had indicated willingness to switch to a caucus system for delegate selection.

To prepare for the primaries and caucuses, and to raise money, Kennedy and his aides had planned to form an exploratory committee in early January. A suite of former Amtrak offices at 440 North Capitol Street had been selected, and some aides think it was the prospect of signing a lease for the offices that forced the timing of Kennedy's decision. The campaign was to have been headed on a day-to-day basis by Dr. Larry Horowitz, chief of his Senate staff. New York lawyer Jack English was to be Kennedy's traveling campaign adviser or a key political strategist. Accused in 1980 of sexism (he had no women in top positions on his staff), Kennedy had hired Ranny Cooper, former head of the Women's Campaign Fund, to be a deputy campaign manager. Mark Siegel, former executive director of the Democratic National Committee, was to have been another deputy, handling politics. Bill Carrick, a South Carolinian, would have been in charge of field operations.

The Kennedyites also had planned to strike fast financially and score big points in public relations. As reported by Oliphant, there were indications that Kennedy wanted to enlist Representative Morris Udall to be a key campaign spokesman, and there were discussions about Kennedy's doing a return interview with Roger Mudd, now of NBC, whose famous CBS interview had contributed to Kennedy's 1980 defeat. Financially, Kennedy's plan called for raising $18.5 million during 1983, so that it would not be necessary to depend—as many 1980 candidates did—on one Tuesday's primary election performance to fund the next week's primary campaign. The plan was so detailed that monthly fundraising goals had been set for the next eighteen months, and individuals had been assigned responsibility for holding specific fundraising events around the country.

Even though he is out as a 1984 candidate, Kennedy undoubtedly will be a major power in the Democratic Party. He can influence who gets the nomination if he chooses (or chooses not) to tell his liberal, black, Hispanic, and labor followers whom he favors. No one in the party will say an unkind word about him, and he remains a heroic, romantic shadow figure to the Democratic rank and file. Undoubtedly he will have a chance to bring down the house again at the 1984 Democratic Convention, and if Reagan runs and wins again, Kennedy will be back as the front-runner for 1988, when no incumbent will be seeking reelection. Kennedy has hinted to some of his aides that he is seriously thinking about 1988, and his new membership on the Senate Armed Services Committee will provide him with foreign policy and defense credentials that he now lacks.

SOME COMMENTATORS, including William Safire, have suggested that there's also a chance that Kennedy might be drafted at the 1984 convention if the economy is in such bad shape that the country is demanding a clear-cut liberal, and if the convention is hopelessly deadlocked. But this eventuality is very remote. "There's no such thing as a real draft," says Mark Siegel. "Such things have to be planned. Furthermore, the system is not designed to produce deadlocks, but a series of one-on-one contests in the late primaries that will give us a clear nominee at least by the first Tuesday in June. We haven't had two ballots at a national convention in either party since 1952, and we won't have one in 1984."

What does Kennedy's withdrawal do for and to the other candidates? In one sense, it means everything to them; in another sense, it means nothing. All Kennedy's opponents obviously are helped when the front-runner quits. His superb staff, key supporters, potential contrib-

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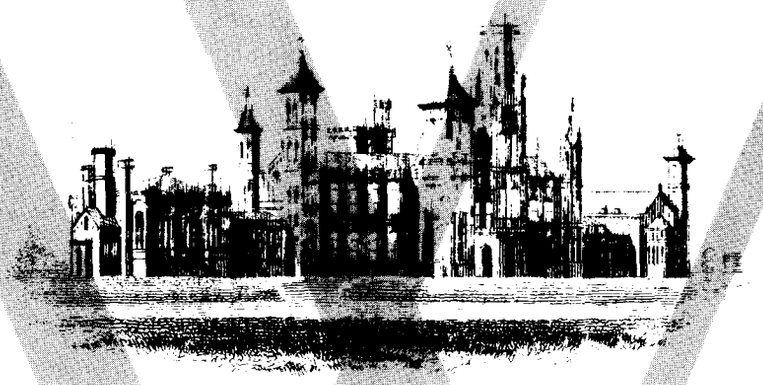

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utors, and constituencies are up for grabs. Who benefits most is debatable. The freeing-up of first-rate political professionals probably aids Glenn more than the others, since of the major campaigns his is the least organized and the most in need of major talent. Glenn has been relying for political advice on a pair of Washington business lobbyists, Robert Keefe and Tommy Boggs, who have limited connections in the various constituencies of the Democratic Party.

Glenn probably will vie with Mondale for the endorsement of the AFL-CIO, but Mondale is more likely to get it. Had Kennedy run, it would have been hard for labor to decide between them. Kennedy's liberal constituency might gravitate to Hart, who was McGovern's 1972 campaign manager, or to California Senator Alan Cranston, who is making the nuclear freeze a centerpiece of his campaign, but that assumes that no new candidates, such as Udall or Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers, enter the field. The groups most adrift are blacks and Hispanics. Also free—but one would scarcely say adrift—are money-raisers and givers. One Glenn strategist said that on the day after Kennedy's withdrawal, he assigned a worker to look over Kennedy's federal campaign reports to compile lists of names. Other campaigns presumably are doing the same.

But after Kennedy's withdrawal, as before, the inherent weaknesses and strengths of the various candidates remain what they were, and the quest for the nomination remains, as one key Mondale aide put it, "a twenty-month, $26 million effort requiring an enormous campaign organization that can sustain itself whatever ups and downs occur." By reputation, Mondale's has been the earliest and best organized of any of the campaigns, possibly including Kennedy's. Mondale aides do not dispute that, much as Mondale does not dispute the notion that Kennedy's departure leaves him the front-runner. The aides contend that Mondale has the largest group of identified workers around the country, the largest and most sophisticated "extended family"—including former Carter Administration aides and the largest cadre of political professionals now working in Mondale's political action committee, in his exploratory committee, or as volunteer advisers.

MONDALE'S STATUS as front-runner will be tested within days, as the first public opinion polls suggest where Kennedy supporters have gone. His lead over Glenn was not all that great before Kennedy's withdrawal (six points), and may not be all that great afterward. Far more important than the polls, though, is the inherent strength of a candidacy—that is, the ability to avoid mistakes, gauge opponents, set agendas, define issues, and appeal for popular support.

One of Washington's smartest policy consultants, Larry K. Smith, former top aide to Gary Hart, has described four styles of recent Presidential candidacy: "surfing," "strategic," "traditional," and "positional." Smith is reluctant to apply the labels to 1984 candidacies, but his description makes it easy for anyone else to do so. "Surfing" means "pointing your surfboard toward the shore, not trying to power your way through and hoping that you'll make it while the waves knock everyone else over." Carter was a surfer in 1976. This year's surfers might include Alan Cranston, Ernest Hollings, and Reubin Askew, plus anyone who decides to leap into the race at this late date. "Strategic" campaigning consists of having a definite idea about the times, being first to set the terms of debate, and targeting opponents' points of weakness. All the candidates will be a mix of the types, but Gary Hart is trying to be the best strategist by defining a new agenda that bypasses that of older Democratic leaders. Carter beat Kennedy in 1980 with strategy as well as the sheer weight of the Presidential incumbency, and Kennedy's 1984 campaign, too, showed strategic sparks.

"Traditional" campaigning, in Larry Smith's formulation, consists of "running for President like you run for county sheriff: assembling an organization, collecting people, issuing statements, stimulating name recognition, responding to issues defined by others. It's adhocery." That sounds much like Mondale's long-march approach to the 1984 campaign, but the Mondale family also contains a number of shrewd strategists, some of the same people who trounced Kennedy in 1980. Finally, "positional" politics consists simply of being somebody or something and letting the electorate come calling. Eisenhower in 1952 was a war hero with nearly universal name recognition and public respect, though with rather undefined politics. Glenn is much the same in 1984, though he does appear to be following a strategy—that of being a centrist and appealing to the South and Midwest.

WHICHEVER of Smith's categories they fit, Kennedy's 1984 rivals all have been given new hope by his withdrawal. They will say—and some of them actually will mean—that Kennedy's action was a courageous act of self-denial, of placing dedication to family ahead of political ambition. Some will also argue that it was good for the Democratic Party, removing the Kennedy shadow from the nominating process and giving other (perhaps more electable) candidates a chance to lead. All of that is true enough, but it is true for this election cycle only. If Kennedy had run this time and lost—either to another Democrat or to a Republican—then he would have had his two chances and would have had to retire from Presidential politics. The country and the Democratic Party could have laid their Kennedy fixation to rest. But by withdrawing, he has kept himself a potential President for the future, so the party and country cannot get over its preoccupation with him, and newer candidates—Bill Bradleys, Mario Cuomos, Bruce Babbits, Jim Hunts—can't really come to the fore. If you think this Presidential race is beginning early, consider this: Kennedy's withdrawal just may have been the beginning of Campaign '88.

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How to reform 'the high ground of the welfare state.'

THE SOCIAL SECURITY HYSTERIA

BY BOB KUTTNER

To put the matter bluntly, Social Security is heading for a crash.

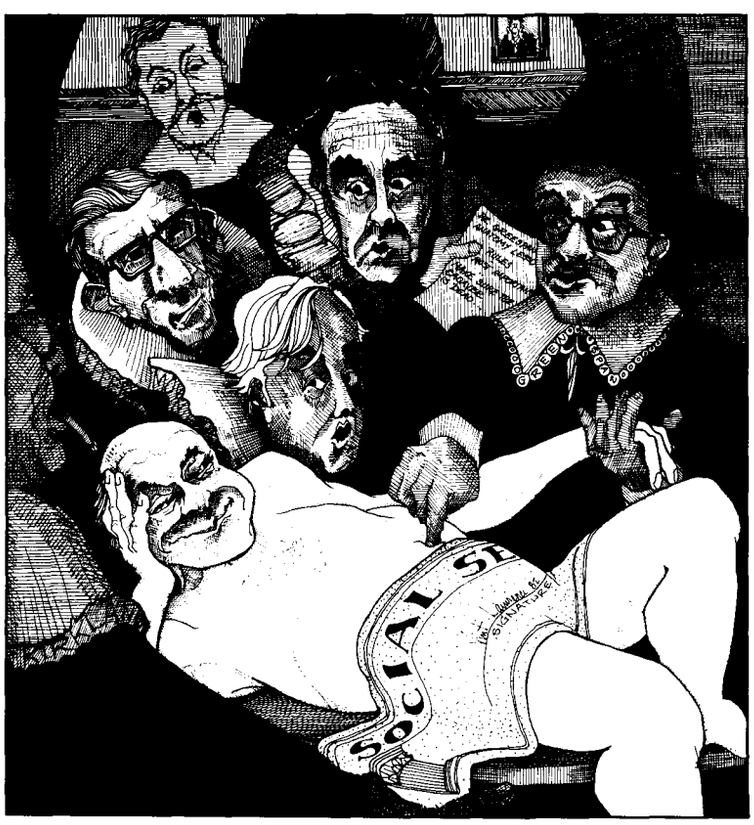
—*The New York Review of Books*, December 2, 1982

Put bluntly, the old have come to insist that the young not only hold them harmless for their past profligacy, but sacrifice their own prosperity to pay for it.

—*The Washington Monthly*, November 1982

TO BE blunt about it, rubbish. Social Security is not heading for a crash, and old folks are not extortionists.

The hysteria over Social Security began in the conservative journals (*The Public Interest* has been sounding the alarm since 1975), but lately the panic has swept across the spectrum. It's hard to pick up a newspaper or magazine these days without encountering an imaginative headline like SOCIAL SECURITY: THE COMING CRASH (over an article by Peter J. Peterson in *The New York Review of Books*), or A COLLAPSING SYSTEM (*Chicago Tribune*), or—my favorite—THE MONSTER THAT'S EATING OUR FUTURE (*Forbes*).



"DR. GREENSPAN'S ANATOMY LESSON," BY VINT LAWRENCE

The calamity stories are remarkably similar—and similarly misleading. The general theme is that changing demography, coupled with the greed of the nation's elderly, is wrecking not just the Social Security system but the entire economy. It is claimed that by early in the next century, Social Security will consume as much as 75 percent of federal revenues; that payroll taxes will grow to as high as 28 percent; that today's workers will get a very poor return on their Social Security taxes, if they get a return at all; and that the economy would be far better off with a substitute system of Individual Retirement Accounts or other private savings mechanisms.

The reports of Social Security's impending collapse are greatly exaggerated. Curiously enough, while the liberal press was catching up with the catastrophe, President Reagan's own National Commission on Social Security Reform was completing its study and concluding that the system is eminently salvageable, given a little foresight and political nerve. The commission—bipartisan and blue-ribbon, of course—was created in September 1981, after Mr. Reagan's original plan to cut benefits by between $80 billion and $110 billion over four years ran straight into a political brick wall.

The commission must report by December 31. At its preliminary discussions over the Veterans Day weekend, all fifteen commissioners—who range politically from arch-conservatives like Senator William Armstrong of Colorado to liberals like Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, and Representative Claude Pepper of Florida—reached a surprising degree of consensus on the magnitude of the problem. They also rejected any radical change in the system. At its final round of meetings, beginning December 10, the commission will attempt to reach agreement on a single plan.

To understand the controversy, it helps to remember that Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system. Payroll taxes flow in and benefits flow out. There is no big pool of capital like that of a private pension fund. The term

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"bankruptcy" does not properly apply, since the real issue is simply whether taxes and benefits match. The system faces both a short-term cash crunch—it had to borrow in November to send out checks—and a long-term need to adjust to changing demographics. Although it is true that the ratio of workers to pensioners is gradually declining from about 3 to 1 to about 2 to 1, it is equally true that the total ratio of workers to dependents (including the young) is remaining quite stable; and it is costlier for society to support a child from birth to age 21 than to support a pensioner from age 65 to death.

The system's basic problem is that since 1972 pensions have been fully indexed to price levels, while revenues from the payroll tax reflect wage levels. During the past five years, wages have fallen behind prices by about 10 percent. In 1980, for example, prices (and hence Social Security checks) went up by 14.3 percent, while wages increased only 8.3 percent. If wages had just kept even with prices, or if Social Security had been pegged to wages, there would be no crisis. Social Security would be running a large surplus well into the next century, the hysteria about "the gypped generation" and "inter-generational class warfare" notwithstanding.

ALL FIFTEEN of the Social Security commission's members agree on three fundamentals. First, Social Security cannot continue to base its tax collections on wages and its benefits on prices. Second, between now and 1990 the system will run a deficit averaging about $25 billion a year, which it must make up through a combination of reduced benefits and increased taxes; after 1990, when the baby boom generation is in its prime earning years, the system will again run a surplus. Third, after about 2010, when the baby boomers begin to retire, other adjustments will be necessary, including a possible delay in retirement age, or lower pension ratios.

One figure helps put the issue in perspective: Social Security today consumes about 5 percent of the gross national product. After the year 2020, even under fairly pessimistic assumptions, it will consume all of 6 percent. And if benefits are shaved, or the normal retirement age postponed, it will consume less. Such are the dimensions of the much-heralded fiscal catastrophe.

Social Security faces both a fiscal and an ideological challenge. The fiscal challenge is manageable enough, though it will require some nimble political brokering, since Republicans don't want to raise taxes and Democrats don't want to cut benefits. The ideological challenge is far more instructive, and, as we shall see, laden with ironies.

Beyond the budgetary pressures, conservatives tend to be hostile to Social Security for several reasons. First—let's be frank—Social Security is our most overtly socialistic program; it deliberately redistributes a lot of income, and not just between generations. If you earn the minimum wage all of your working life, your pension under Social Security will equal about 60 percent of your last paycheck. If you earned the top wage subject to payroll taxes (currently $32,400), Social Security pays you only 27 percent of that. Thanks to Social Security, the poverty rate among the elderly has dropped from 25 percent in 1970 to 15 percent today. Some 15 million retired people would be living in poverty if not for Social Security. In 1978 Social Security provided 39 percent of all of the money income received by the elderly, and 76 percent of the income received by the elderly poor.

This redistribution was, of course, deliberate. The whole purpose of Social Security was to guarantee a minimally decent standard of living for the aged, without a means test; and the absence of a means test is the other major feature that rankles the right. Where income transfers are necessary at all, conservatives prefer that they be strictly limited to the needy; a means test is stigmatizing and thus useful as a deterrent. Demands for means tests are invariably accompanied by protestations of genuine humane concern. But when the moment comes to provide the funding, the right invariably produces a Stockman-like character to explain that, unfortunately, the money is not available.

The conservative critique also argues that Social Security is at once a bad deal (returns might be higher on private savings) and too good a deal (millions of Americans who "don't need it" get Social Security, and the young will go broke paying the bills.) Moreover, the right contends, Social Security, as a nearly universal but spurious form of savings, depresses the true rate of capital formation and thus the rate of economic growth.

Conservatives suggest a neat way of cutting the knot: introduce a means test for the "welfare" portion of Social Security, and offer incentives to gradually privatize the business of saving for retirement by the middle class. It is a rare issue of any right-wing policy journal that doesn't include an article explaining that if we phase out Social Security in favor of Individual Retirement Accounts, pensioners will get a better rate of return, and the national savings rate will soar. Needless to say, this theme has been eagerly embraced by the nation's financial institutions, since it would provide a steady source of long-term, "blocked" (that is, no withdrawals) savings accounts.

IN THEORY, the Reagan Administration ought to be very receptive to this line of argument. The Reaganauts feel stymied by entitlements, and privatizing Social Security would remove the biggest barrier to new budget cuts. As David Stockman told William Greider in the *Atlantic* interview, "The Social Security problem is not simply one of satisfying the actuaries. It's one of satisfying the here-and-now budget cuts." Moreover, Mr. Reagan's current chief economic adviser is Martin Feldstein, a man who built his early reputation as an econometrician by offering gloomy warnings about the damage Social Security was inflicting on private savings. Mr. Feldstein, in a now famous and highly controversial 1974 journal article anticipating supply-

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side economics, calculated that Social Security was depressing the gross national product by precisely 19 percent a year. In other words, were it not for Social Security, our economy would have grown by more than two *trillion* dollars in the past four years.

Another White House Social Security expert is Peter Ferrara, author of two books sponsored by the libertarian Cato Institute, *Social Security: The Inherent Contradiction*, and *Social Security: Averting the Crisis*. Mr. Ferrara's reform plan is to privatize the whole system, using tax credits to encourage people to shift to Individual Retirement Accounts. This, Mr. Ferrara ruefully admits, would have cost the Treasury $62 billion in 1982, a sum he suggests could be made up by selling off federal lands and perhaps by delaying the retirement age to 68.

IRONICALLY, Mr. Reagan's own Social Security commission is having no truck with any of this. Privatization is not even part of the debate. And despite the seeming philosophical and fiscal appeal of this ultimate reform, the White House is prudently keeping its privatization theorists far away from the commission and the press. Intentionally or not, the President has a commission that reflects the broad public support for the present Social Security system. In appointing Alan Greenspan, formerly Gerald Ford's chief economist, as chairman, President Reagan bought himself a small-*c* conservative who is taking seriously his mandate to salvage the system. Mr. Greenspan, in turn, appointed as his executive director Robert Myers, another impeccably conservative man, trained as an actuary, who spent his entire professional career working for the Social Security Administration and came out of retirement to serve as Mr. Reagan's own deputy Social Security commissioner. In fact, Mr. Myers has been with Social Security since before it existed. In 1934 he served as the junior actuary for President Roosevelt's Cabinet Committee on Economic Security, which invented the system. In his own scholarly writings about Social Security and savings, he has dismissed Mr. Feldstein's claims as nonsense. Hiring Mr. Myers to dismantle Social Security would be like hiring Admiral Rickover to privatize the Navy.

The commission's senior Democrats are former Social Security commissioner Robert Ball, a shrewd and courtly infighter whose grasp of the technicalities matches Mr. Myers's, and Representative Pepper, at 82 the grand champion of America's elderly, and the new chairman of the House Rules Committee. The commission's other Congressional members, with one exception, have just faced an electorate in no mood to play games with Social Security. The exception is Robert Dole, who is running for President. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Mr. Dole stands to gain stature by helping to broker a Social Security solution.

In short, Social Security turns out to be the high ground of the welfare state. President Reagan's own reform commission is the reflection and the metaphor of that deep political reality. The hysteria has succeeded in shaking the public's confidence in the system's soundness, but not its political support. According to recent polls, nearly three-quarters of Americans under 54 worry that Social Security won't be there when they retire, but over 90 percent oppose major changes in the system. In all likelihood, the great 1982-1983 Social Security crisis will be remembered not as the welfare state's Dunkirk but as its Battle of Poitiers. And before liberals join in the fashion of making "entitlement" a bad word, they would do well to reflect on why Social Security is so well bolstered.

By American standards, Social Security is a truly radical idea. It seems less so today only because we have grown up with it. But Social Security remains sharply at odds with the bedrock premise of pure capitalism, because it insulates people to a degree from the reverses of the market, and does so as a matter of right. Social Security is perhaps our most important expression of social solidarity and of the philosophy of "social citizenship." Everybody gets old, or hopes to, and everybody ends up on Social Security. This helps explain its formidable public support—despite the fashionable counteroffensive of market economics.

That support is not just philosophical. It reflects the plain fact that Social Security is economically superior to any alternative that most Americans could afford to purchase in the private market. Unlike a private pension, Social Security is fully portable; it goes with you from job to job. Unlike an annuity, it keeps pace with inflation. And unlike an Individual Retirement Account, which might provide a higher rate of return for those with the discretionary income to afford one, Social Security also provides disability and survivorship protections. If you die or become disabled early in your career, an I.R.A. gives your family the nest-egg accumulated to date and nothing more.

Despite the government's reputation for administrative incompetence, Social Security is efficient to run. Because the Social Security system doesn't have to support hordes of insurance salesmen out of its premiums, its administrative costs are only 1.3 cents on the dollar. To realize all of Social Security's benefits privately, one would have to buy disability coverage, life insurance, and find a fully indexed private pension plan. Few could afford it.

THE CLAIMS about the negative economic effects of Social Security are also miscast. The claim that abolishing Social Security would boost private savings rates is the subject of an excruciatingly technical and ultimately inconclusive debate among econometricians. In general the debate presumes that most of the people now heavily dependent on Social Security would otherwise have accumulated substantial savings. It's a dubious proposition. In fact, as Henry Aaron, a Brookings economist, points out in his new book, *The Economic Effects of Social Security*, private savings rates in the U.S. have fluctuated within a very narrow band since World

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War II, a period when Social Security coverage and benefit levels were steadily rising. And most European countries, which have higher pension coverage, have higher private savings rates as well.

While it is true, as the critics say, that the very first generation of Social Security beneficiaries got a relatively better deal than future generations, that was by design. Getting elderly people out of the work force with assured income served the social purposes of reducing unemployment and stabilizing purchasing power. The only way to accomplish that in the 1940s and 1950s, when the system was not yet actuarily mature, was to begin paying benefits that were not entirely "earned." Moreover, the claim that today's workers are therefore a "gypped generation" overlooks the immense value to middle-aged workers of their parents' financial security. Anybody with an aged parent on Social Security, rather than in the spare room, knows that Social Security prevents more "inter-generational class wars" than it creates.

Social Security, almost uniquely among American social programs, is a universal program. That is the essence of its broad support. It is our strongest non-market barrier against the harsh logic of a pure market economy. That is what makes it such a conservative target—and that is why liberals are so foolish when they join the handwringing about "entitlements." Social Security is able to redistribute so much income to the poor precisely because it redistributes within the context of a universal program that provides broad benefits to the middle class. Isolating those portions of Social Security that function as an antipoverty program might make fiscal sense, but this would quickly erode the system's entire political logic.

The problem with means-tested programs is that poor people, by themselves, are seldom a popular or an effective constituency. In budgetary crunches, poverty programs are the first to feel the knife. That is why Medicaid (means-tested) keeps getting cut back year after year, while Medicare (universal) keeps sailing along. Wilbur Cohen, Lyndon Johnson's Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, knew better than anybody that programs limited to the poor make poor programs. He made his one great blunder when he assented to a separate medical program for the poor.

Despite Mr. Reagan's rhetoric about the truly needy, his budget politics prove the point beyond doubt. Public housing (means-tested) gets deep cuts, while the homeowner tax deduction (universal) is untouchable. Pensions have largely kept pace with the consumer price index, while Aid to Families with Dependent Children has fallen 25 percent behind inflation since 1972. With rare exceptions, such as Legal Services, programs targeted to the poor tend to be invasive, stigmatizing, mediocre, and poorly defended. The State manages to treat pensioners with dignity, but it gets very snoopy with welfare recipients.

ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS, of course, do tend to outrun their financial constraints, precisely because they are universal. The political blessing becomes a fiscal curse. For liberals, the task is to restrain the fiscal excesses of Social Security without backing away from the principle of entitlement.

That task presents some tricky political bargaining, but it is far from impossible. The Republicans on the Social Security commission are receptive to a bargain that would include some benefit cuts and some tax increases, as long as the political credit or blame is shared equally with the Democrats. The Democrats have informally offered a plan drawn up by Robert Ball. The Ball plan would move up to 1983 the higher payroll taxes now scheduled for 1990, but would offset Social Security taxes with a credit so that most wage earners would end up paying slightly less payroll tax then they do now. This amounts to a backdoor shift to general treasury financing, since the tax credit would reduce income tax receipts. In exchange, commission Democrats are willing to shave benefits a bit; they have offered to postpone the annual cost of living adjustment from June to October, which would provide a one-time savings of about $20 billion, and to adjust benefits so that they don't outrun wages. Both Republicans and Democrats support the idea of making Social Security mandatory for federal employees and for employees of nonprofit organizations, which would bring the system another $21 billion of the new revenue it needs to stay solvent between now and 1990, when the demographic pressures will ease.

Even more important than the specific fiscal solutions is the chemistry of the Social Security commission. The entire panel seems to want to fix up Social Security once and for all. Off the record each of the members compliments the opposition for taking the issue seriously and for resisting the temptation to play politics with it.

A sound, fair, and politically feasible plan for putting

COMING:

Irving Howe
on
Orwell's '1984.'

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our most successful social program on a sound fiscal footing might look like this:

Tie annual adjustments in benefits to increases in wages, not prices. Social insurance literally means that retirees are pooling their risks with the entire economy. It is unfair for pensioners to enjoy cost of living increases tied to the consumer price index, when most wage earners, at least in the past half-decade, have had to settle for less. Greenspan, Myers, and Ball—the commission's informal executive committee—all agree on this key point, and other members of the panel say privately that even Representative Pepper will go along as part of a compromise package. This reform will permanently end the system's fiscal instability. And if the economy recovers to the point where wages again outpace prices, as they did in the 1950s and 1960s, retirees will gain. Estimated savings between now and 1990: $60 billion.

Put Social Security income on the same footing as other retirement income. At present, Social Security benefits are subject to an "earnings test," which reduces benefits by fifty cents for every dollar earned over $6,600. This is the equivalent of a 50 percent tax for pensioners who supplement their benefits with a part-time job, while pensioners who enjoy outside income from stocks and bonds face no benefit reduction. The solution is to eliminate the earnings test (this would help low-income retirees) and to include Social Security benefits in taxable income, with a fairly high exemption—on the order, say, of $20,000. Pensioners with total incomes of less than $20,000 would pay no income tax on their Social Security benefits. Higher-income retirees, who are less needy, would have to pay tax on their Social Security benefits, just as they now must do on private pensions or I.R.A.s. This bargain gives the senior citizen lobby something it has long sought, repeal of the earnings test, in exchange for something it strenuously opposes, taxation of benefits. It's a reasonable trade. Estimated savings between now and 1990: $55 billion.

Extend mandatory Social Security coverage to federal employees and to employees of nonprofit organizations. At present, federal civil servants have their own retirement system. If "new" federal employees—those with less than five years' service—were covered by Social Security, their civil service retirement could still continue, the same way company pension plans supplement Social Security for private sector employees. Because federal employees tend to earn higher than average wages, including them in Social Security would produce more revenue than cost. Estimated savings between now and 1990: $21 billion.

Make Social Security a partially "funded" system—one that draws part of its income from a pool of capital. Social Security has operated on a pay-as-you-go basis only since 1972. In its original design, it operated more like a private pension plan: payments into the system accumulated a big capital surplus, and the interest on that capital paid a portion of the benefits. According to Robert Myers, during the 1950s Social Security paid about one-quarter of its benefits from interest on its capital funds. Unfortunately, as the capital surplus accumulated, Congress could not resist delaying scheduled tax increases and enacting hikes in benefits, which reduced the capital surplus to a contingency fund, and eventually to nothing. As things now stand, Social Security will again accumulate a capital surplus during the 1990s, which will dwindle again after 2010 as the baby boom generation begins to draw retirement benefits. But if the reforms proposed here are enacted, and are continued beyond 1990, Social Security will again accumulate a big capital fund—big enough to stabilize the system well into the twenty-first century. Changing Social Security from a pay-as-you-go system to a partially capitalized one also neatly finesses the conservative criticism of Social Security as a drain on private savings. As a funded system, Social Security would serve as a new *source* of savings. And this pool of savings would be in the public sector—available to reduce the national debt, or to purchase state and local bonds, or even to capitalize a new development bank.

TAKEN TOGETHER, these fairly modest fiscal reforms would stabilize Social Security. The commission has before it a menu of hundreds of other possible changes in taxes and benefits. All that stands in the way of intelligent reform is partisan politics. Key members say they will be able to agree on a compromise plan only if both President Reagan and House Speaker Tip O'Neill privately agree to support it. It makes no sense for a Robert Dole or a Barber Conable on the Republican side, or a Lane Kirkland or a Claude Pepper on the Democratic side, to bargain away a cherished principle if the bargain is to be reopened once the package reaches the President's desk.

Until now, the White House has stayed out of the commission's way, pleased to have someone else grappling with the thorniest nettle of the political year. The outlines of a package are well within the commission's reach, as long as President Reagan resists the temptation to grandstand about no new taxes, and Tip O'Neill restrains his natural impulse to defend the present benefit structure to the last nickel. Depending on Mr. Reagan and Mr. O'Neill, the commission could propose a formal take-it-or-leave-it package, or it could give up and send the White House the whole menu. Ultimately, the issue will end up in Congress, since the commission has no power to legislate.

It's too early to predict the exact outlines of the eventual Social Security reform. But there is little doubt that Social Security will survive as an entitlement program—that it will survive Mr. Reagan, Mr. Stockman, the press hysteria, and the craven parade of liberal and neo-liberal budget balancers who should know better. And its survival will reflect less credit on today's liberals than on the foresight of an earlier generation, who were far clearer about what they stood for.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A Free Man

Sartre by Himself doesn't mean Sartre all alone: it means Sartre as described and explained by himself. In this film, made in 1972, he replies to questions from, chiefly, four friends. Unastonishingly, it runs three hours and ten minutes. Also unastonishingly, when the film was released in France (which, for some reason, was not until 1976), he said, "I have changed; I would not speak in the same manner I used in 1972. I have changed so much that I see this movie as a phase in my evolution. . . ." This from a near-blind man of seventy-one who was to die three and a half years later. Harold Rosenberg, in a perceptive review of Sartre's autobiography (1965), wrote: "Proust threw himself back into a past that was waiting for him. For Sartre only the future waited, and his task was to derange it so that he could avoid keeping the appointment." I take this as admiration of the fact that Sartre had a dislike of intellectual stasis, that he insisted on "evolution," that he wanted, through change and growth, to elude the future that seemed fixed ahead of him.

Sartre by Himself
(National Audio-Visual Institute)

Time for Revenge
(Televicine International)

This film was co-directed by Alexandre Astruc, the noted French director who once collaborated on the screenplay of Sartre's *The Respectful Prostitute*, and Michel Contat, a young associate of Sartre who has since collected and annotated some of his writings. Both Astruc and Contat also appear briefly, as questioners. The cinematographer was Renato Berta, who has shot several films for Alain Tanner. These three men have tried to make the event as filmic as possible, interweaving appropriate bits of newsreels and a public Sartre lecture, inserting some of a café conversation with actors; but basically it's still three hours in the study of Sartre's apartment, listening to him converse with friends. Sheerly in visual terms, it's like an adequately directed TV talk show with complementary illustrations.

On Sartre's left sits—again unastonishingly—Simone de Beauvoir. The Film Forum in New York, which gives this film its U.S. theatrical premiere, showed a few years ago a comparable film about de Beauvoir, made by two other directors in 1978. Many of the questions asked her in that film were put by Sartre, older looking of course than in his own film, unaffectedly subordinating himself to her. Quite apart from the intrinsic interest of the questions and answers, I was touched by the sight of these two old campaigners, linked most of the time for fifty years, whose works have certainly not been universally or invariably praised but whose careers are an indisputable part of intellectual history. Now we have an extensive documentary on each of them in which both of them appear.

The Sartre film underscores what David Caute wrote in his four-installment obituary for the *New Statesman* in 1980:

> It was Sartre who first suggested to me a tone, a style for our century. Brilliant, prolific, cocksure, a passionate contemporary, he was a man totally committed to the project of understanding (and saying) everything. Nothing short of a total exploration of man's total condition—the hopelessness of the project did not deter him—could satisfy his immense appetite for understanding.

This film records some characteristic conversation of that man: reminiscence, synoptic restatement of ideas, personal embroidery around the life and the work. Consequently it has much weight, little novelty, considerable repetition (if you have read Sartre), and flickers of impromptu nonsense. (For instance, he says he must finish—though he didn't—his immense study of Flaubert, not for the awaiting bourgeoisie whom he despises but because it may be of use to the masses in the future. It's a mite difficult to conceive of the future masses cuddling up with those two Flaubert volumes that he finished, 900,000 words.) Terms and names that have always run through his work—among them, bourgeois, masses, intellectual, freedom, reason, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Marx—inevitably figure in the questions and his answers. Inevitably, too, the talk varies in textural depth, but our attention never flags because of the very reason for the film's existence: it is Sartre speaking.

There is one great neglect. In his obituary, Caute wrote: "The artist and the philosopher remained inseparable." The film almost separates them. Few of the questions are about Sartre's works of art or, except for the Flaubert book, about his art criticism. We do get the brief café scene where he talks about the theater with the actors Serge Reggiani and François Perier and others; and we do get a tape of Reggiani doing part of one of Franz's speeches from *The Condemned of Altona*. (Reggiani was the original Franz.) Yet, at a guess, less than 10 percent of the film deals with Sartre as artist. By the time he died, Sartre's intellectual influence had waned severely; his stature as a philosopher had been sharply attacked; his political views, fluctuating as they did, had been bombarded. But much of

FILMS WORTH SEEING

La Femme Enfant. After *Nosferatu* and *Fitzcarraldo*, Klaus Kinski's performance, as a gentle recluse who loves a teenage girl, confirms his high stature. Raphaele Billetdoux wrote and directed this delicate first film.

Gandhi. Prime acting and Richard Attenborough's dedicated (if uninspired) directing keep this long epic from being Good For You and make it good.

Smithereens. The SoHo rock and drug scene, done with much more than glib naturalism in Susan Seidelman's first feature.

The Verdict. Paul Newman, splendid as a sodden Boston Irish lawyer fighting his way back to a career. Pretty sharp script, pretty fine production.

SK

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his work in art still stands. I think it a reasonable guess that it will outlast much of his other work.

Nausea is one of the central novels of our century and, contrary to general impression, was not part of the postwar existential flood: it was published in 1938. Some stories in *The Wall* are almost as good as the novel. Among his plays, *The Flies* and *No Exit* do not yet show symptoms of mortality: *Dirty Hands* is a smashing political thriller; *The Condemned of Altona*, imperfect though it is, is the largest attempt yet made in dramatic literature to deal with the subject of German war guilt—and its ramifications. I am also very fond of *Nekrassov*, which attacks the capitalist press with the weapons of Feydeau, especially because Sartre chose to write a farce and, in my view, succeeded. (Cocteau said of it: "One could not imagine more grace, more ease, more mischievousness. . . .") The collected essays and lectures and interviews in *Sartre on Theater* are rich. His big pudding of a book on Genet has plums stuck all through it. He also did some writing for the screen. He collaborated on *The Chips Are Down*, he wrote the screen adaptation of Miller's *The Crucible* for French production, and he took a commission from John Huston to write the screenplay for *Freud*. (Huston's account of this episode, in a book by Gerald Pratley, is funny. Sartre turned in a script of 400 pages, nearly four times the usual length of a script, then went over to Huston's home in Ireland to discuss it. The two men talked about cuts and changes. Sartre returned to Paris and a few weeks later sent in a script of 600 pages. Another writer was engaged.)

THEN THERE IS *The Words*, Sartre's story of his first dozen years. Said Rosenberg: "*The Words* revolutionizes the form of autobiography by destroying the notion of a one-way progression from earlier to later phenomena. One might, adapting Freud, call it a case study in the Dramapathology of Everyday Life." (Sartre mentions in the film that he wrote another such volume—as yet unpublished.)

Who today reads the religious and philosophical works to which Tolstoy devoted so much of his last thirty years? I don't equate Sartre with Tolstoy as artist or Tolstoy with Sartre as philosopher, but a hundred years from now, the balance may have swung similarly to Sartre's art as it has with Tolstoy's. I wish this long, continuously engrossing documentary devoted more time to Sartre the artist.

A vigorous film, just arrived from Argentina, has something of the same theme and charge as *The Verdict*, reviewed last week. *Time for Revenge*, written and directed by Adolfo Aristarain, is about an ex-radical who is having a hard time finding work. He acquires false papers so that he can get a job as dynamiter for a mining company—part of a huge conglomerate—that is blasting away toward a copper deposit far south of Buenos Aires. At the camp, he finds a former political comrade, also with new identity, who has worked out a scheme, a fake accident, to get a huge settlement from the company. The hero agrees to help.

The plan doesn't exactly abort, but it cants; and the dynamiter is left as the antagonist of the company, the conglomerate. He needs to pretend muteness, as the result of the accident, in order to win an award from a court.

Once again we have a David and Goliath confrontation, except that in this case Goliath is wealth, not the social power that it is in *The Verdict*, and David is telling a falsehood, not truth, as revenge for true wrongs in the past. Again the climactic arena is a legal tribunal; again there is a last-minute shocker.

Aristarain has devised a tight, fast film, familiar in its motions but deepened by political colorations. The cast is completely satisfying, especially Federico Luppi as the dynamiter, Haydee Padilla as his wife, and Julio de Grazia as a shrewd lawyer. *Time of Revenge* doesn't have the exceptional texture that Sidney Lumet was able to get with his cast and his technical colleagues, but this Argentine film has what *The Verdict* does not have: under the legal struggle are rumbles of deeper, larger political unrest.

The neoconservative criterion for culture.

MATTHEW ARNOLD & THE COLD WAR

BY LEON WIESELTIER

In a century of artistic and critical heterodoxy, there has been a striking orthodoxy, which is the faith in modernism. It is almost always deemed to have embodied the century's most essential energies, to have constituted its contribution to the unfolding of the human spirit in art. The full force of the modernist faith, however, is most dramatically apparent in the dizzying history of its intellectual and political alliances. Modernism has attended the most diverse visions of society. Mystics, revolutionaries, royalists, Marxists, liberals, conservatives—all, at one time or another, have instantiated the modernist creed, and looked to it as the natural complement in culture of their creed in politics. To this list there must now be added a new intellectual species—actually a subspecies—the neoconservatives. At a time when the political fortunes of neoconservatism, and of the social and economic forces in American society that it has supported, may be mercifully on the wane, there has recently appeared *The New Criterion*, edited by Hilton Kramer, the first neoconservative journal of culture.

Nowhere in *The New Criterion* is there any mention of the old *Criterion*, which was also called *The New Criterion*, the review edited by T. S. Eliot from 1921 to 1939. This may seem a little odd, because the new shares more than its title with the old; it shares also its general thesis, which is the affinity of high art for conservative politics. Perhaps the editors of the new review were reluctant to invoke its predecessor because they know how brutally this thesis was refuted by events after 1939, when high art saved nobody from low deeds. In fact some of the philosophical and aesthetic grounds for these low deeds were prepared by *The Criterion*'s contributors. There is not much political glory, then, to be borrowed from it. But there is another reason for *The New Criterion*'s reticence about its namesake, which is that it does not exactly reproduce its position. *The Criterion* married modernism to monarchism. *The New Criterion* marries modernism to capitalism, and to the middle class.

The marriage of modernism to capital-

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ism is a retort to the marriage of modernism to Marxism. *The New Criterion*'s quarrel is not with *The Criterion* of the 1930s, but with *Partisan Review* of the 1940s—with the generation of intellectuals that preceded Kramer's, that believed simultaneously in socialism and the highest soundings of sensibility. The socialism was hardly revolutionary; it was analytic, a criticism of the capitalist constructions of social and cultural life, and it was utterly unillusioned about what the criticism of capitalism had brought about when it was realized in Russia. The socialism was in many ways indistinguishable from liberalism. The more it tended toward liberalism, the more it tended toward the middle class, and the more it tended toward the middle class, the more it tended toward what Lionel Trilling called "variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty." Now comes *The New Criterion*, with a new twist. It proposes to defend capitalism from the point of view of art, and modernism from the point of view of politics.

The New Criterion's first point about contemporary culture is that it has been politicized. "We are still living in the aftermath of the insidious assault on mind that was one of the most repulsive features of the radical movement of the Sixties." Thus the editors, in the introduction to their journal. The assault on mind, they argue, takes place in the name of "ideology or publicity, or some pernicious combination of the two." The ideology is Marxism and, more generally, anti-Americanism. It is responsible, in the first place, for the degradation of art criticism into "propaganda." And as the criticism of art goes, so goes the criticism of literature. "Political purposes are increasingly infiltrating literature," writes Joseph Epstein.

> So thoroughly politicized has contemporary literary life become that most people assume it is the literary man's duty to be on the side of revolution, to find the United States racist and the members of the middle class either desperate dogs or insensate swine.

Or, as the editors write, "what it seems to come down to is a fervent wish on the part of many writers to dissociate themselves from the capitalist society in which we live," when in fact

> capitalism, for all its many flaws, has proved to be the greatest safeguard of democratic institutions and the best guarantee of intellectual and artistic freedom . . . that the modern world has given us.

The editors conclude their statement of purpose with the demand that "the first condition of any serious criticism of the arts in the contemporary world" must be "that it is now only in a democratic society like ours that the values of high art can be expected to survive and prosper."

Capitalism certainly has the best record on democracy. The rest is false. American writing, for example, has hardly declared war on the middle class. The spiritual condition of that class is the subject of Saul Bellow and John Cheever, who have surely contributed more to the national literature than E. L. Doctorow and Robert Coover have taken away; and there is no more persuasive proof of the reputation of the middle class than the reputation of John Updike, the poet of its smugness, whose work does more than anything produced by the "political" writers to give the adversary attitude a good name. And since when is the adversary attitude toward the middle class a betrayal of the literary vocation? It is, quite the contrary, the novel's mother's milk. For two centuries novelists have been composing the annals of bourgeois airlessness, and not the maker of Emma Bovary, nor the maker of Effi Briest, nor the maker of Anna Karenina, ever called for the class to be destroyed. The neoconservative charge against contemporary literature is a commonplace about modern literature, except in the use to which it is put. This use is the political delegitimation of doubt. It is not treason to your class, however, to tell the full truth about it, especially if you continue within it. ("One should live like a bourgeois and think like a demigod" was how Flaubert put it.) The worst you can be accused of is bad faith, but bad faith may be all there is for those who love truth and hate revolution. In this sense it is especially outrageous when the neoconservatives bash Roland Barthes, that really indispensable writer. It was Barthes who taught his time that the bourgeoisie's facts of nature are really facts of culture; but it was he who lingered, more than anyone since Proust, over the possibilities of happiness contained in those facts.

IT IS NOT the case that literary criticism has surrendered to politics, either. American criticism does not suffer from too excessive an engagement with the world outside the word; it is, if anything, trapped in textuality. But then the neoconservatives think so, too. They have it both ways. They like to trash structuralists and deconstructionists for "proving that reality doesn't exist," as Epstein writes; and then they trash them for acting like literature doesn't exist, for making it stoop before politics. Damned at the superstructure and damned at the base. The truth is that not all formalism is sterile and not all Marxism is insurrectionary, that aestheticism has no necessary relation to anti-Americanism, that there are good critical reasons for staying at the surface and good critical reasons for going below.

What's more, there is a difference between the criticism of the political and ideological position of a writer, which belongs to the war of ideas, and the inquiry into the political and ideological function of literature, which belongs to the theory of culture. The latter is not a politicization of criticism. It is compatible, quite the contrary, with the most contradictory politics and ideologies. And it is a field into which American criticism has only recently entered. American criticism has finally transcended the dreary debate between "form" and "content" and gone on to really interesting questions about the intersection of the two. Some of the critics of American criticism, however, have

LOVE POEM IN TWOS AND THREES

What kind of people
are these? Some stammer
of land, some
want nothing but light—
no house or land
thrown away for a woman,
no ample recklessness.
How much I need
a woman's soul, felt
in my own knees,
shoulders and hands.
I was born sad!
I am a northern goat
of winter light,
up to my knees in snow.
Standing by you, I am
glad as the clams
at high tide, eerily
content as the amorous
ocean owls.

ROBERT BLY

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not; and some of them think that an idea is refuted when it is called "fashionable" or "exotic," and that any idea that was introduced into American criticism in translation, and between the Port Huron statement and the 1980 election, is already wrong.

BUT SOMETHING more fundamental is false—*The New Criterion*'s premise that "it is only in a democratic society like ours that the values of high art can be expected to survive and prosper." The history of the relationship between democracy and culture is considerably more complicated. The values of high art have survived in this political system, but they have not always prospered. A democracy usually puts downward pressures upon culture. This is inevitable wherever arithmetic is a measure of authority. The spirit of creation is not the spirit of consensus; or, as Seferis gently put it, "art is for all men, never for the masses." For this reason, popular culture is a constant threat to high culture, a threat about which *The New Criterion* is terribly worried.

It is not for the sake of art, however, that political systems are designed. Democracy and art is a subject that must be handled carefully. The view that there is an essential connection between political legitimacy and the products of the imagination has been a motive for all sorts of wickedness. Art is a form of election, an uncommonly strenuous effort of the spirit. It was the revolutionary achievement of liberalism in the seventeenth century, however, to do away with election as the basis of enfranchisement in society. This was part of its more general expulsion of the soul from politics. There are conservatives who want this liberalism repealed, who desire that the soul be returned to politics, who believe that it is still a requirement of political systems that they satisfy spiritual needs. The neoconservatives are not yet among them. But they appear not to appreciate that a demotion of culture followed from the secularity of democracy, that the fortunes of art are uncertain in a society that is philosophically opposed to public rewards for spiritual privilege. Democracy must be defended, but on other grounds.

"What text, what painting, what symphony, would shake the edifice of American politics?" George Steiner recently asked. It is an unfair question, because art should not be asked to. Art is not impossible in a democracy; it is only impeded. But there is a historical truth

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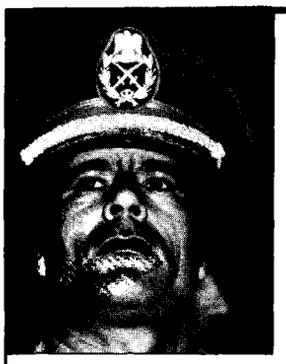

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behind Steiner's question, which is that the fortunes of art have been furthered also in undemocratic societies. Communism has been a condition of the work of Milosz, Kundera, Brodsky, Konrad, to name only the living, and Fascism a condition of the work of Borges, García Márquez, Vargas Llosa. These are (in *The New Criterion*'s favorite phrase) "serious" writers all. The history of the relationship between tyranny and culture, then, is also complicated. But this must be properly understood. The inspiration that dictators visit upon writers sweetens nothing, obviously. It is not even an irony. It is a crime—not least a crime upon the writer. "Polish books have only one subject," Milosz wrote gravely in a poem to Lech Walesa. It is precisely in undemocratic societies that art is politicized, not by the artist but by the society. The artist starts as a slave to public subjects, and the dissident artist, too. The real triumph over tyranny, therefore, is not a poem about freedom, but a poem about love—a poem that neither submits nor resists, because it takes freedom for granted. Not the right politics, but no politics. The greatness of the United States in the matter of culture may be described this way—it is a place for no politics, a place for private subjects. When liberalism separated the soul from society, it made the fate of the soul into a private subject; and when it made the fate of the soul into a private subject, it prepared for the writers of our time an argument against the totalitarian nature of our time's tyranny. The indifference of American society to art irritates some Americans, but it is for this indifference that some of the Russians are here. They dreamed of a place where politicians don't read poetry.

Democracy's purpose with respect to "high art," then, is not to need it. That is the good news, and the bad. Politics is not expected; and just as the artists and the writers must not rely upon the powers, the powers must not rely upon the artists and the writers. In the 1960s the attempt was made to enroll culture in the service of anti-Americanism. Now the attempt is made to enroll culture in the service of pro-Americanism. Why is the love of capitalism any less damaging to art than the hatred of capitalism? Or the service of one ideology better for criticism than the service of another? It is the service itself that is the problem. Politicization is politicization. As citizens of this country, its writers and artists have all the duties of citizenship, but the duties of citizenship do not include their work. That is theirs. When freedom is real, it is forgotten. For this reason democracy is always in danger, because it is not always busy with its own defense. But part of what it defends is the freedom to forget about freedom. This is the basis in the real world for the neoconservatives' fear, but there is not much, at least in the realm of culture, that they may do about it.

"It is time to apply a new criterion to the discussion of our cultural life—a criterion of truth." So say the editors. Naturally nobody is against "truth," but there is more that must be said. It was said by Andrei Sinyavsky, in his brilliant essay "The Literary Process in Russia," which appeared in 1976 in the first English collection from *Kontinent*.

> It is at this point that literature must be on its guard and not give way to the seductive spell of speaking the truth and nothing but the truth. . . . This attitude is one of the chronic failings of the nineteenth century, which we have inherited from two books with interrogative titles: *Who Is to Blame?* and *What is To Be Done?* We are again faced by the eternal Russian dilemma: Where is your allegiance, you professional purveyors of culture? Whose side are you on? Are you for the truth, or the official lie? When the question is put like that, the writer has no choice but to answer proudly: for truth! And that is the only fitting reply in such a situation. But in proclaiming oneself to be on the side of truth, it is worthwhile remembering what Stalin said when some brave members of the Union of Writers asked him to explain once and for all what socialist realism was, and how, in practical terms, to attain those glittering heights. Without taking a moment's thought or batting an eyelid, the leader replied: "Write the truth—and that will be socialist realism!"
>
> The point has been reached when we should fear the truth, lest it hang round our necks again like an albatross. Let the writer refuse to tell lies, but let him create fiction—and in disregard of any kind of "realism. Otherwise all this promising, liberated literature will again be reduced to a recital of the torments we suffer and the remedies we offer in their place. It will revert to those questions: "What is to be done?" and "Who is to blame?" And everything will again fall to pieces and it will begin all over again: "liberation movement," "naturalist school," "realist school," and as the natural culmination we will end up again with "Party literature," with writers, in Lenin's words, acting as "screws and cogwheels" in the "common proletarian cause." It would be a good thing to avoid all that; to refrain from offering ready-made recipes. Having exorcised ourselves from the lie, we have no right to succumb to the temptation of the truth. . . . We must put a stop to our cringing and currying favor with that hectoring taskmaster—reality! After all, we *are* writers, artists in words.

NOT LIES, but fiction. It is a kind of Hippocratic oath for writers. I have cited it at such length because of the moral achievement it represents—this was written by a Russian writer. If the distinction can be made over there, it can be made over here. If in the Soviet Union, where lies are necessary to live, where they keep you in your job and out of jail, a writer has a right to something other than "truth," then a writer has a right to it in the United States, too. We have truth, so let us have fiction. But "a criterion of truth" is not a criterion of fiction. It is really a criterion of utility, of political and ideological utility.

The neoconservatives are in a pretty tight spot. They must find a way to mobilize the moral resources of this country without mocking them. They are correct to claim that democracy has difficulty in recognizing its enemies, that it puts itself at a psychological disadvantage. And the cure that they propose, this "new criterion," is not quite worse than the disease, as their critics claim; they are not McCarthy. Still, the strain they propose for the imagination is not just. If the writer in the Soviet Union can-

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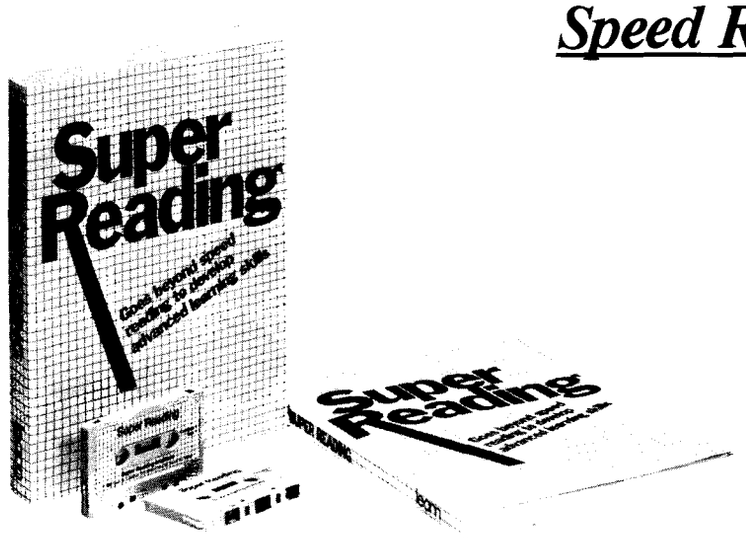

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not write as he pleases because the Soviet Union is totalitarian, and the writer in the United States cannot write as he pleases because the Soviet Union is totalitarian, where on earth can he write as he pleases?

THERE WAS MUCH literary glory in the old *Criterion*. In its first issue there appeared *The Wasteland*, which for a literary magazine is a good start. Later issues introduced to English readers the work of Proust. Yeats, Lawrence, Joyce, Lewis, and Pound were published in its pages. In this respect, too, the *Criteria* will forever differ. Not merely because the age is poorer—for that the neoconservatives cannot take the rap. What distinguishes *The New Criterion* from its predecessor, already in its first issue, is its philistine air. (The excerpt from Elias Canetti's memoirs included in the issue is like china in a bull shop.) Consider Joseph Epstein's essay on "The Literary Life Today," a long rant in which it is established that there is nothing. "Contemporary literature has not been able to produce a towering literary figure"; "so few American masterpieces have been produced in the last quarter-century"; "one is hard pressed to think of an important literary critic"; "ours has been an age without great literary magazines"; "the literary intellectual is disappearing"; "there no longer seems much reason to look to Europe for any sort of cultural guidance or literary example"; and so on. This is not criticism; it is accounting. And consider Epstein's argument against certain schools of literary theory: "It is all very ingenious, this work of structuralists, semiologists, Foucaultists; it is also all very boring." With this the man thinks something mental has been accomplished.

We may conclude from this manner of discussing literature not merely that the nattering nabobs of negativism are no longer on the left. We may conclude also that at the heart of the neoconservative concern for tradition there is a deep longing for an official culture. What else does this mourning for masterpieces and towering figures mean? Epstein needs a canon, because without a canon he has no bearings. He cannot abide the inconclusive condition of culture in the present, which is always the condition of culture in the present—it leaves him too exposed to art's elements, too unprotected by opinion, too much at the mercy of his eye and his mind. Instead, he wants the reading of masterpieces by towering figures—a certified experience of art.

But this is philistinism with a twist—philistinism in the defense of modernism. The defense of modernism is a major objective of the neoconservative campaign in culture, and it is the subject of the most intellectually impressive article in *The New Criterion*'s first issue, Hilton Kramer's "Postmodern: art and culture in the 1980s." Kramer traces with great lucidity the birth of modernism in the revolt against bourgeois philistinism, and proceeds to protect it against postmodernism, the recent revivals of bourgeois modes of art and design, which he interprets as the summation in a single style of the attack on "the concept of seriousness" in the 1960s. But if the spirit of modernism was assaulted from the left then, it is assaulted from the right now—and in the pages of Kramer's journal. For Epstein's fear of the new, his contempt for those who are trying to do without formulas, or without *his* formulas, amounts to a yearning for an Academy. It is status raised to an aesthetic value, and meanness of spirit raised to a principle of culture. The friend of masterpieces is not quite the friend of art.

It is in Kramer's contributions that the main themes of this analysis of culture are best developed. He writes to praise "seriousness" and to bury the 1960s. He claims that the cultural agenda of those years was to "sever the link between high culture and high seriousness" by proposing an essentially facetious aesthetic, known as "Camp"; and his discussion of the consequences of "Camp" in the decade that followed is illuminating. But Kramer, too, goes too far. Not everything postmodern is political, and not everything postmodern is a joke. Kramer may not like the buildings of Michael Graves or the poems of John Ashbery, but there is certainly "seriousness" within them, and a disciplined evaluation of the past.

The most unsatisfactory aspect of Kramer's analysis is his failure to face up to the contradiction between the marriage of modernism and capitalism, on the one hand, and the history of their relations, on the other. These relations have not been harmonious. The adversary attitude to which Kramer is politically opposed had a basis in reality. Modernism *was* a cultural insurrection, and sometimes also a social insurrection, and sometimes even a political insurrection. Indeed, Kramer has written many times in sympathy with the modernist defiance of the commercial class; and he has written many times in sorrow about the domestication of that defiance. Postmodernism, in his view, is a "yearning" for the bourgeois satisfactions that have been destroyed. But then it is the accommodations of postmodernism that must be resisted, not the anger of modernism. The truth is that capitalism has not sustained modernism, but swallowed it. The natural ally of capitalism is precisely postmodernism. Modernism lives with capitalism in an inauthentic state, but postmodernism lives with it authentically. The careers of Philip Johnson and Andy Warhol make this plain. Theirs is the art that is most hospitable to the profits point of view, that has replaced "seriousness" with social expression, and artistic profundity with an eye for the main chance. They are the artists who have precisely the attitude of acceptance that Kramer seems to feel is appropriate. The debate about the styles must be joined on aesthetic grounds, then, not on the grounds of economic or social theory. Modernism cannot be helped by capitalism, because capitalism helps something else. And capitalism cannot be justified by modernism, because modernism is not in the business of making such justifications. It is an art of opposition.

IT SHOULD BE APPARENT that the controlling critical notion of the neoconservatives, the talismanic term that will drive whole decades away, is "seriousness"; and, like "truth," nobody is against "seriousness." But the source of neoconservative "seriousness" is rather interesting. It is Matthew Arnold. Arnold is everywhere. Last spring Joseph Epstein published an earlier version of his *New Criterion* essay in *Commentary* in which he set forth the premises of his kind of *pompier* criticism. The essay was called "Matthew Arnold and The Resistance"; "Matthew Arnold has become perhaps more important than ever before," he announced. That is because "standards, for him, were essential," whereas "standards in literary matters have been shaky for a long while now." Epstein cited Arnold's "The Literary Influence of Academies" approvingly, for its regret that there existed in England "no body of opinion . . . strong enough to set up a standard." Then there appeared in the September issue of *The Atlantic* Hilton Kramer's attack on Susan Sontag's attack on "the Matthew Arnold idea of culture"; Kramer went on to defend "the Matthew Arnold idea of cul-

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ture" against what he called "the Oscar Wilde idea of culture" (as if the author of *Intentions* was just another flimsy aesthete). And now in *The New Criterion*, in a revaluation of F. R. Leavis, Norman Podhoretz adduces Arnold as the final authority on "the exercise of discrimination."

Leavis, not Trilling. There's the rub. The return of Matthew Arnold is not the return of Lionel Trilling, even if it was Trilling who taught Arnold to this generation. These are all Trilling's wayward sons. (The neoconservatives' Trilling problem is too large to go into here. Suffice it to say that it is rather classically Freudian: the father was slain in Norman Podhoretz's *Breaking Ranks* and deified in William Barrett's *The Truants*.) They are his wayward sons not least because they did not learn their lessons well. In their hands Arnold is diminished. He is emphatically not the man who lamented that

> our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them these practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of these practical ends is all that is wanted.

The ideal of seriousness is not Arnold's only ideal. It comports in his criticism with the ideal of disinterestedness, which he defined as "a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches." This is not the spirit of *The New Criterion*. It has practical ends to serve. It will not be accused of "variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty." The substance of art is not opinion, and the pleasure art provides is not the pleasure of being right.

CURSED AND BLESSED

Robert Lowell: A Biography by Ian Hamilton

(Random House, 527 pp., $19.95)

A once popular concept of the poet that still lingers on in some quarters perceives him as: (1) an eternal child, unable to look after himself and living by the grace and nurture of friends and sympathetic strangers; (2) a heavy drinker and womanizer—except when he is (2a) a drug addict or pederast; (3) capable of saying and doing the most outrageous things; and (4) mad as a hatter. The notion, though more often wrong than right, fits Robert Lowell with classic—or should we say romantic?—precision. Although three of his contemporaries curiously resembled him in this—John Berryman, Theodore Roethke, and Delmore Schwartz, all of them, at one time or other, his friends—Lowell, a more prominent poet and public figure, emerges as the foremost *poète maudit* of America's recent past.

Lowell's life, then, if you look kindly at the above schema, was an archetype; if you don't, a cliché. Either way, the biographer who would do it justice must possess extreme tact, lest he too fall into oversimplification. The ideal biographer, of course, would be a divinely dispassionate creature, presenting all the germane information, interpreting the facts as perceptively as the works, but leaving ultimate judgment to the reader. Yet the great virtue of impartiality does not generate the kind of energy needed for an arduous biography such as Ian Hamilton's remarkable, nearly 500-page *Robert Lowell*, into which went extensive reading, tracking down, and interviewing. Such books can be motivated and sustained only by passion: usually love, but sometimes hate. That Hamilton's book, on such a recent and pitfall-surrounded subject, can cleave so close to calm sympathy rather than to rowdy partisanship, to critical appreciation rather than to worship or envious malice, is no small achievement in itself.

Hamilton began the job at a time when most of the major figures in the poet's life were still alive and atingle with memories that the biographer taped in extensive interviews. He also read all manner of correspondence, not only from and to, but also *around* Lowell. For not since Wilhelm Meister (and he, after all, was only a fiction) did anyone have such a concerned society of protectors in back of him, counseling one another on how best to be of help, and stepping forward—singly or in teams—whenever actual assistance was needed.

Moreover, as a poet and former editor of two distinguished journals, Hamilton is well equipped to deal not only with Lowell's writings, but also with their sundry revisions, for the poet had an "inability (and this lasted all his life) to read a page of his own work without rewriting it." Thus certain parts of *Robert Lowell*—and they are among the best—read like the beginnings of a variorum edition of Lowell's poetry. Furthermore, Hamilton has culled the writings of some of Lowell's literary friends, associates, and spouses (e.g., Peter Taylor, Norman Mailer, Jean Stafford—though, inexplicably, not Elizabeth Hardwick) for fictionalized but not unrevealing aspects of his subject's life and personality.

Robert Traill Spence Lowell, IV (1917-1977), was the son of Robert Lowell, III, an amiable but weak naval officer who later went into business, and his powerful, domineering wife, Charlotte, née Winslow. That Robert senior came from a lesser branch of the illustrious family and that he lacked ambition were unforgivable flaws to Charlotte; and the always uneasy marriage provided young Cal (as he was to be dubbed at St. Mark's, his fancy but unintellectual school, either after Caliban, whom he once played, or after Caligula, whom he often tried to emulate) with a background in in-fighting and manipulativeness. At St. Mark's, where he distinguished himself mostly for roughness and slovenliness, he acquired his first pair of lifelong friends, followers, and amanuenses, Frank Parker and Blair Clark, as well as his first

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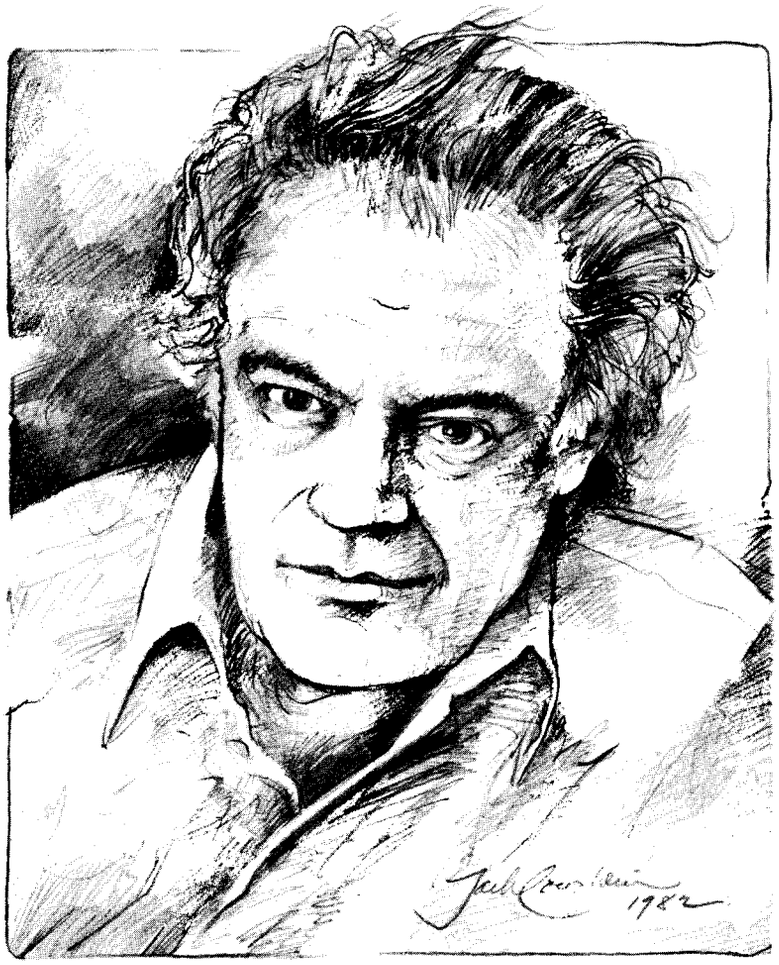
literary mentor, the English teacher and poet Richard Eberhart whom Lowell was later to surpass, criticize in turn, and finally condescend to.

After a couple of unsuccessful years at Harvard, then under the presidency of his cousin A. Lawrence Lowell—to whom Cal was to write, some years later, one of the most patronizing job applications in recorded history—the future poet was placed by his mother under the care of Merrill Moore, a poet-psychiatrist (and, subsequently, Charlotte's employer and lover) who was connected to the Fugitives, and it is by him that Lowell was directed southward, to become the disciple of Tate and Ransom at Vanderbilt, and thereafter of Ransom at Kenyon College, where he formed lasting friendships with Peter Taylor, Randall Jarrell, and John Thompson. Despite tremendous uncouthness and messiness, he ended up graduating with top honors in Classics, becoming the class valedictorian and, as it were, Ransom's poetic son and heir. At Kenyon, Cal had begun writing poetry more seriously, though at age 21 he could still commit verses such as "his sinewed eyes, wildish elliptic orbs,/compressed intensity in jellied meat" and "—O felly blank, O general review!"—perhaps the worst line of printed English poetry since the notorious "O Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!"

There followed the marriage to the novelist Jean Stafford, whose face he smashed up in a car accident (he was the worst of drivers), and, after she underwent long and painful surgery, resmashed with his fists during one of his periodic rages; according to Blair Clark, she lost 25 percent of her good looks in the process. Jean was a Catholic, as were such friends as Mrs. Tate and Robert and Sally Fitzgerald, and Cal was converted, to become, as a friendly Jesuit put it, more Catholic than the Church. He used his faith, in verse and prose, as an eminence from which to fulminate against enemies and terrorize friends. Later, when, as Stafford felt, Catholicism had served his literary purpose, Cal began his gradual return to Episcopalianism and rabid anti-Catholicism. During World War II, Lowell refused an army commission, became a conscientious objector—although he was jailed for one year rather than the customary three, and at a minimum security prison—thus beginning his career as a public figure with the much-publicized "Declaration of Personal Responsibility" sent to F.D.R. Eventually, Cal and Jean acquired the first of the poet's beloved New England houses, and began a life of assiduous drinking and boisterous entertaining. Meanwhile Lowell had also started his career as teacher or poet in residence, which he was to pursue intermittently, here and abroad, until his death.



ROBERT LOWELL BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Then came the first major extramarital affair—with Gertrude Buckman, the ex-wife of ex-friend Delmore Schwartz, and the declaration that, reborn in this new love, Cal was leaving Jean. Stafford agonized as Lowell, now Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress, was reborn yet again, this time thanks to a Washington socialite, whom, during an intimate evening at home, he almost strangled in a fury over her inadequate reading of Shakespeare's plays. A pattern was formed: about once a year Lowell's madness would come upon him in concert with "a new life" through a grand passion (though sometimes without), and leading, after some extraordinarily manic behavior, to confinement in an institution, domestic or foreign, according to where he happened to be.

Meanwhile Lowell was rapidly making his literary reputation: first as our leading formalist poet with *Lord Weary's Castle*; then, after a slump with *The Mills of the Kavanaughs* (deemed too obscure and long-winded), as our leading *vers librist* (under the influence of a new mentor, William Carlos Williams) with *Life Studies*. Divorced, Lowell had met Elizabeth Hardwick at Yaddo—where, in one of his bursts of anti-Communist mania, he waged an ugly and unsuccessful campaign against the allegedly fellow-traveling director of that artists' colony—and, in 1949, married her. She stood by him—lovingly, helpfully, heroically—through the annual outbursts of what, after many false diagnoses, was finally labeled manic-depressive psychosis; for 23 years she endured through the failures of psychotherapy, shock treatment, and Thorazine. Much later, lithium was, for four years, able to control Lowell, but by that time he was married to Lady Caroline Blackwood. When lithium and Blackwood also failed, and *that* marriage broke up, Lizzie let Cal stay with her for ever longer periods. Returning from a short visit with Caroline, Lowell died of a heart attack in the taxi arriving at Hardwick's door. Clutched in his hands was a parcel containing Blackwood's portrait.

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We follow, too, the politicization of Robert Lowell: his anti-Vietnam War activism (fairly mild); his open letter to L.B.J. to refuse an invitation to the White House he had previously accepted; his association with and campaigning for Eugene McCarthy, which may have helped scuttle Honest Gene's unsanguine bid for the Presidency. There are the literary friendships (and virtually no enmities, unless with Auden) with older poets such as Frost, Eliot, and Pound; with contemporaries, such as Jarrell, Berryman, and Elizabeth Bishop; with students or disciples, such as W. D. Snodgrass, William Alfred, and Adrienne Rich, who was later to turn on him ferociously. There are brief but perspicacious evaluations of Lowell's poetic and dramatic output (the latter less important to Lowell: he found playwriting "so easy—it's a crime"), and fastidious excerpts from contemporary reviews of Lowell's works, not forgetting the adverse ones. Quite often Hamilton manages such lapidary insights as "it was probably harder for Lowell to discard rhymes than to invent them," and, by way of explaining the slackness of the later work, "The death of Randall Jarrell had removed the one critical voice Lowell was in fear of."

There are fine accounts of Cal's comradeships with men—some literary, some not—who helped him variously: editing his poems, getting him in and out of hospitals, soothing his hurt or angry women, or just listening to him; and no less fine accounts of relations with mistresses and wives, who had happy periods ensconced or traveling with him; endured bouts of vehement infidelity or violent insanity; fumed at being abandoned by him, and yet often went on caring and wanting him back—sometimes even advising him about other women. What Hamilton cannot quite convey, however, is the reason for all this love and support lavished on this difficult, sometimes charming but as often inconsiderate and hurtful, man.

WAS IT his poetic eminence? The magic of the Lowell name? The large, strong, good-looking exterior that nevertheless betrayed vulnerability? The albatross-like helplessness when not immersed in his own element, poetry? These and other reasons are adduced and illustrated with quotations and anecdotes, but the Lowell appeal does not become concrete and palpable. Perhaps it could not, in any biography. Hamilton evokes the fury of later composition—

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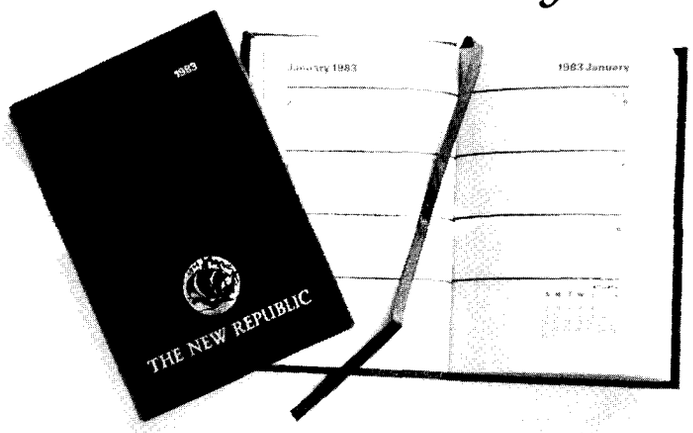

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four pseudo-sonnets a week for a couple of years. He conveys the grimness of the years when, conversely, no poetry would come. He summons up the tragicomic ecstasy and horror of the manic phases, and the "dark, post-manic and pathological self-abasement" of those that followed. Yet out of tactfulness, or the modest wish to keep himself out even though he knew Lowell, we get something like a documentary whose voice-over narration has not yet been added to the soundtrack.

So we read Lowell's proposal, from one of his sanatoriums, to Elizabeth Hardwick:

> How would you like to be engaged? Like a debutant [sic]. WILL YOU? How happy we'll be together writing the world's masterpieces, swimming and washing dishes. P.S. Reading *The Idiot* again.

Was ever lady in such humor wooed—and won? Doesn't this call for a comment from the biographer? Did Lowell really think he and Lizzie would be united in masterpieces? Or was he joking? Or mad? Or just reading *The Idiot*? Again, Hamilton gives many instances of Lowell's truly atrocious spelling, even hints at dyslexia, and reproduces early drafts of poems crawling with spelling and grammatical errors. But he does not speculate on what this means psychically, never mind psychiatrically.

OR HAMILTON will quote in extensive and riveting passages the pleas of Lowell's American friends, who knew Lizzie and Harriet (Cal's daughter by her), not to publish in *The Dolphin* certain poems incorporating raw and embarrassing autobiographical data, such as excerpts from Hardwick's anguished letters and phone calls. He will then quote English friends, who did not know the persons and miseries involved, urging the poet to publish everything in the interest of art. And he records faithfully Lowell's own squirmings and tergiversations. But he never enters the fray himself. This is admirable. Yet why doesn't he bring in, for our enlightenment, how other poets have dealt with like problems—for example, George Meredith, in his very similar quasi-sonnet sequence *Modern Love*?

And although Hamilton handles Lowell's madness exemplarily—without stinting, smirking, or glossing over—he is not always fair to those who feared or reprehended it. Thus he paraphrases "enemies" of Lowell's: "How was it, they could disingenuously wonder, that this renowned spokesman for correct liberal causes persistently 'revealed,' in mania, a fascination with tyrants and monsters of the right?" Why that "disingenuously" and those quotation marks? There is no doubt, from Hamilton's own account, that Lowell was obsessed with Hitler—Jonathan Miller reports on Cal's keeping a copy of *Mein Kampf* on his shelf under a *Fleurs du Mal* dust jacket—and that, as Blair Clark stated, "an absolutely infallible indication of an impending manic episode was an interest in Hitler." At the University of Cincinnati, where many mistook Lowell's mania for the proper behavior of a famous poet, they were rewarded with a lecture in praise of Hitler just before the lecturer was carted off to the psychiatric ward. (In more benevolent accesses of frenzy, helped perhaps by lithium, Cal would identify himself with Alexander the Great or Christ, not Hitler.) At an English clinic, Jonathan Raban found Lowell holding a piece of steel and declaring it was "the Totentanz. This is what Hitler used to eliminate the Jews." Yet Hamilton seems tacitly to censure Caroline for considering "the mere mention of Hitler . . . a danger sign." In view of the rages she had experienced, small wonder.

Even more unappealing—because not excusable by madness—was Lowell's snobbery. This meant "taking the . . . aristocracy and family tradition seriously," as Cal wrote his parents; going on the odd "little ancestor worshiping spree" and compiling lists of antecedents, and growing ecstatic over a distant cousinship with Boswell; questioning everyone on a trip to the Orkneys about Traills and Spences; and even understatedly flaunting the sumptuous way in which he, like other Lowells, would be buried. At Milgate, Caroline's country house, Cal enjoyed playing the country squire, and was delighted to identify himself and his wife as "Robert and Lady Caroline Lowell." He was vastly overimpressed by his fleeting association with Jackie Kennedy, and announced in one of his crazier moments that "L.B.J. has asked me to be in his Cabinet." To Peter Taylor he recommended England as having "safe schools, no negroes." And with snobbery came arrogance: "Father, forgive me/my injuries,/as I forgive/those I have injured." (Not those who injured me.) No comment on all this from Hamilton.

But even on the poetry, Hamilton sometimes allows himself a slight bias. Though hard on Lowell's poorer works, he will let slip a remark about "one of Lowell's most perfect [sic] and impenetrable" images, as if impenetrability were a virtue; he will gush about the line "The Lord survives the rainbow of His will," even though, as he says, no one has been able to explicate it. There is something show-offy even about Lowell's best poetry—a hunting for effect that Jonathan Raban was to describe as follows: "For almost every sentence that Cal ever wrote if he thought it made a better line he'd have put in a 'never' or a 'not' at the essential point." Raban also cites Cal's first quoting Mme. Flaubert's line about her son, "Till the mania for phrases dried up his heart," in the poem on Flaubert, then blithely changing it to "enlarged his heart," thus reversing the meaning and rewriting history. Calvin Bedient cites Lowell's recasting "Often the player's outdistanced by the game" as "Often the player outdistances the game," which is better, but testifies to a lack of passionate conviction. No comment from Hamilton.

STILL, the book is splendidly researched and documented, and its general knowledgeableness and subtlety are couched in a pleasingly perspicuous style. I found few factual errors: the poetess Louise Labé is transsexualized into "Louis Labe," the magazine *Commonweal* becomes *Commonwealth*, and Ted Roethke's fatal heart attack is said to have occurred on a tennis court rather than, as it did, in a swimming pool. This cancels the prophetic tone of Lowell's last letter to Roethke: " . . . to write we seem to have to go at it with such single-minded intensity that we are always on the point of drowning." Nicely put; indeed, much of Lowell's prose is most impressive. On the whole, I prefer it to his poetry, which, though full of powerful images and resonant lines, is a poetry of patches rather than of rounded poems.

And what a strange patchwork the life itself was: fraught with triumphs and exultation, beset with periods of humiliating sequestration and self-torment. All the same, when you consider how Lowell was taken care of by so many devoted hands, never obliged to do uncongenial work or left in serious financial straits, and recognized and exalted during his lifetime, you will agree with Elizabeth Bishop's remark to him: "In some ways you are the luckiest poet I know!"

JOHN SIMON

John Simon's *Something to Declare* will be published next month by Clarkson N. Potter.

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THE EDIFICE OF DOMINATION

The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South by John W. Cell

(Cambridge University Press, 320 pp., $34.50, $8.95 paper)

South Africa and the American South, perhaps the two most pervasively racist societies in the world during the period after 1890, would seem to cry out irresistibly for comparative study by historians. Yet when John W. Cell of Duke University entered the field a few years ago, he felt he was "being pulled into a historiographical vacuum." Nothing of consequence had been forthcoming since the days of Lord Bryce at the end of the last century and Maurice Evans a bit later, who both wrote more journalistic than scholarly treatments. Then suddenly, while Cell's book was in press, three serious comparative studies burst into print.

The most comprehensive of these was George Fredrickson's *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study on American and South African History* (1981). Yale scholars produced two more: Stanley Greenberg's *Race and State in Capitalist Development: Comparative Perspectives* (1980), and a symposium volume edited by Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (1981). All three, and now a fourth, are written from different perspectives, and each makes distinctive and significant contributions to a virtually new field of comparative history.

Given the modern type of historical training and specialization, the predominant pattern of the comparative history enterprise has been that of a native and specialist in the history of one country heroically striving to master the history of another and to bring together some aspects they have in common for comparison—often with emphasis on the other country. Fredrickson is an excellent example. Sometimes experts on two countries pool their efforts, as did Lamar and Thompson. Cell is a rare exception: a native of this country and a specialist on the other. It may be that he has turned his Southern background to advantage in this adventure in comparative history.

With disarming candor Cell admits that his book is

> not based on extensive archival research but on a combination of secondary and contemporary published sources. Among other things it is a comparison of how historians of South Africa and the American South have analyzed the origins and evolution of segregation.

But by the comparative study of historiography he hopes that he has "contributed something to history." This he has indeed done, not only by sophisticated and discerning criticism of existing literature from both countries but by findings and insights of his own as well.

As the title indicates, the book focuses on a *stage* of white supremacy and not the whole—a much larger subject—and on segregation, which he calls "the highest stage." White supremacy under slavery, plantation, and frontier conditions depended on "vertical" coercion, personal authority, white over black; under urban and industrial conditions, in contrast, it required a "horizontal" system, and segregation proved to be the answer in the South and in South Africa. Far more than mere physical separation, segregation is a complex of interlocking economic, political, legal, social, and ideological components maintained by the dominant group through monopoly over the political institutions of the state. Interaction between de facto and de jure practices is a circular process by which custom becomes law and law creates custom. Between them they serve to keep the subjected groups in their place through the entire range of a society that is constantly bringing them together with the dominant caste. Far from being the crude work of "rednecks," segregation is the subtle, flexible, complex fabrication of sophisticated elites. Offering a basis of collaboration to the elite of the victimized caste, rationalizing and legitimizing patterns of caste and class, segregation perpetuates white supremacy in a hostile world and presents "one of the most successful political ideologies of the nineteenth century." It could be (and often was) incorporated into the milieu of "progressivism."

Any scholar who has seriously tackled a major problem of "origins" will appreciate what Marc Bloch meant by the historian's "idol of origins." Following Bloch's example, Cell carefully distinguishes harbingers and precedents from origins. The true origins of segregation are not in slavery or on the frontier but in the modern conditions of the 1890s, and it did not "just happen": it was made to happen. He acknowledges the influence of South African Marxist historians in locating the point and conditions at which the system was crystallized, but he thinks they have "gone too far" in insisting on "class as real and structural" and dismissing race as "fictitious, mystifying, and superstructural." By so doing they "have oversimplified a complex problem." He is not one to avoid complexities.

IN SPITE OF the vast distances and differences between the two countries, the comparative field of segregation (not including white supremacy) strikes Cell as "remarkably tidy." With a common time frame, long histories of racial oppression, and the consolidation of segregation little more than a decade apart, both white and black actors in the historic drama on both sides of the world were conscious of relationships between the two movements. The American South took the lead, and South Africa watched with a mixture of apprehension, envy, and wonder, and sometimes with horror at the extremes of racial bitterness and violence in its Western partner. The larger amount of space and attention in *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy* goes to the historiography and history of the American South rather than its African partner—just the reverse of the relative proportions characteristic of a comparative study where the author is a specialist at home and a novice abroad.

In my discussion of American historiography that follows, it is only fair that the reader be alerted to an anomaly: a conspicuous proportion of the literature on segregation addressed by Cell consists of the writings of the reviewer and the revisions advanced by his numerous critics. I can only try to be as fair in my criticism of Professor Cell as he has clearly tried to be with me and my critics. That effort is admittedly facilitated by what I think is his tendency to agree with me more than with them. I emphasize

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tendency, for he has reservations and his own point of view.

The issues are complex and rather slippery, but they focus on questions of origins and motives—the when-and-why questions of segregation. The thesis advanced in my work more than thirty years ago and elaborated later emphasizes discontinuity in the development of Southern racial policy. Granting the existence of precedents and harbingers, I contend that the segregation system (and total disfranchisement that accompanied it) had its true origins in the revolutionary changes of the 1890s and later. Before that time I suggest that less rigid and harsh "alternatives"—though not an "open" or "integrated" or "equal terms" society as Mr. Cell mistakenly understands me to say—were possible. While economic and social changes prepared the way, I hold that the basic motives were political and that the new system was instituted mainly to gain or perpetuate political power.

Revisionists and critics have from early on attacked the emphasis on discontinuity, and contended that Jim Crow laws and disfranchisement represented no break with the continuity of Southern tradition and that the origins of segregation lay in slavery times. More recently, conservative, liberal, and radical historians have joined in reviving the old continuity thesis on the economic, social, and political as well as the racial front. Some critics have held that the "forgotten alternatives" of racial policy were never really in the cards, and others have leaned toward economic determinism rather than political motives to explain the origins of segregation. It has been a lively and fruitful controversy, carried on with complete civility. It has inspired numerous works of importance on both sides. I have responded with revised editions of *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* to accommodate new findings but have continued to maintain the original thesis. The argument continues undiminished.

Cell tries to give the revisionists their due, seems to agree with them on the unlikelihood of alternative racial policies, and concedes something to their stress on class over race conflict. But he pulls back from seeing planters as anticapitalist aristocrats, balks at the numerous forks in the so-called "Prussian Road," and rejects simple economic determinants. Weighing the opposing arguments, he sometimes waffles and "finds it hard to choose." He even says, "This may be one of those relatively few cases when both sides are right." But in the end he comes down firmly on the side of discontinuity and modern origins of segregation and argues that it was "not economically determined" but instead "grew directly out of political responses to circumstances that were mainly political."

On the history and historiography of South African segregation, Cell sees strikingly similar developments and historical interpretations, except that in South Africa the historiographical positions are reversed. There the argument that segregation was the result of a continuous evolution from frontier and slavery and Afrikaner racism is maintained by the old school; it is the recent revisionists, largely Marxist or neo-Marxist, who maintain that segregation as a coherent system and conscious ideology emerged only after the Boer War. It was no "anachronistic legacy from the frontier past" but a deliberate response to modern economic, political, and social conditions.

PROFESSOR CELL'S major contribution to the history of both South African and Southern American segregation is to point out the extent to which it was the work of the "best people" in both countries—liberals, moderates, professionals, upper class humanitarians and their allies in England on one side and in the North on the other. They saw it as a softer, more flexible and intelligent alternative to the more brutal forms of racial repression that might thus be avoided. In America, to quote Cell, "the record of the Best South and its Northern allies was one long compromise with injustice." In South Africa it was Cape liberals who drafted the Native Land Act of 1913. The founding fathers of South African segregation professed the warmest fondness for African traditions and a romantic veneration for the African past. They cherished tribalism and thought cities bad for Africans because urban life would disorient and detribalize them. American intellectual counterparts of these South Africans celebrated Afro-American folkways, dialects, and endearing quaintness that they sought to preserve and foster. Black welfare was, of course, their professed concern.

Illuminating comparisons abound. Birmingham's iron and steel labor force in 1910 was 75 percent black, which Cell calls "a South African statistic." While immigrant proletarians of Northern cities

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were turbulent, Birmingham blacks were relatively contented, and white tranquillity and solidarity owed all to the blacks. Where agriculture and industry met, the mixture of black people and white cotton was "destined to last only as far as the gin." The pure white cotton-mill village of the South seemed to envious white South Africans a perfect model of how poor whites could be made industrious and self-sufficient. South African whites saw "fleeting images of their own future" in America, yet found it "full of examples of what must be avoided," especially the lynchings and riots. As in most comparisons, differences are as illuminating as similarities. It was the rise of militant Afrikaner nationalism that made South Africa's evolution after World War II "fundamentally different from that of the American South" and "hardened segregation into apartheid."

As the author himself says, "this book is about white people," for "segregation was a world white people made." In a final chapter, however, he attempts to treat the reactions, mainly psychological and political, of the people of color on both sides of the Atlantic to the system of which they were the victims. He really does not have the space to do justice to such diverse figures as "sambo," Booker Washington, Gandhi, Du Bois, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, and it was probably unwise to try. Apart from that, however, this must be regarded as a book of genuine importance, a first-rate contribution to an ongoing historical controversy.

C. VANN WOODWARD

C. Vann Woodward, a contributing editor to TNR, is Sterling Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University, and the editor of the Oxford History of America.

OLD HAT

Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic by Daniel Lawrence O'Keefe

(Continuum, 581 pp., $24.50)

While this book hardly deserves the ecstatic eulogies of the prepublication reviewers: "work of unmatched scope," "breath-taking accomplishment," "the birth of a classic," etc., it is a remarkable and, in certain respects, unique production. By any reckoning it is a very good value for the money. The 500 pages of main text contain about 240,000 words to which must be added another 100 pages of small print containing no less than 2,500 footnotes. Most of the text is in a spare undecorated style appropriate to an encyclopedia article; the footnotes, some of which are themselves encyclopedic, even more so. But the reader has a hard time. In place of a general index we are offered an elaborately cross-headed seven-page table of contents, but the footpaths through the jungle that are posted in this way are very difficult to follow. The hundreds of author references in the footnotes are not reassembled into a bibliography.

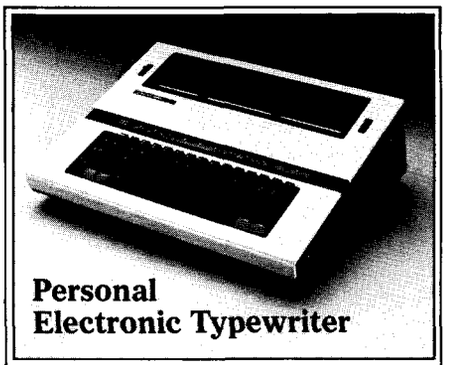
We are told hardly anything about the author except that he is a magazine editor, that he was educated at Columbia College, Oxford University, and the New School for Social Research, and that he was born in 1928. The Oxford experience was clearly crucial since it brought him into contact with the social anthropologist Evans-Pritchard who stimulated his interest in the Durkheimians, especially Marcel Mauss, whose work provides the foundation on which O'Keefe's skyscraper is constructed.

O'Keefe was probably at Oxford in the early 1950s. His assiduous note-taking seems to have started around that time, though it must have continued, at least spasmodically, until quite recently. However, the general framework of his sociological thinking had evidently become set before 1962. It belongs to the era of Talcott Parsons in his *The Social System* phase. Durkheim, Weber, and Freud are the key hero figures in the background. Vilfredo Pareto, who was Parsons's fourth demigod, seems to have been dropped. O'Keefe refers occasionally to the work of the structuralist authors of more recent times, but he views it only at a distance.

In the formal sense the book provides a historical survey of sociological theories about "magic" that have been put forward during the present century. For the pre-1950 period this is well done, but the relatively early intellectual deadline means that the drastic consequences of Lévi-Strauss's *La Pensée Sauvage* and *Le Cru et le cuit* go unrecognized. This is the equivalent of writing a history of modern linguistics that ignored the work of Noam Chomsky.

One other complaint. The spellings of authors' names are frequently bizarre, e.g. Goldenweisser for Goldenweiser, Van Gennup for Van Gennep, not just once but many times over. But that perhaps is nit-picking; considering the size of the book, the standard of proofreading is high.

In 1895 magic seemed to be what anthropology was all about. Frazer's two-volume version of *The Golden Bough* had made its initial impact and was in the process of expansion to a final thirteen volumes. The scholars concerned took it



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for granted that magic was readily distinguishable from nonmagic and that all magic could then be reduced to two basic forms: "white (i.e. beneficial) magic," which was carried out in public and socially approved, and "black magic" (sorcery), which was performed in secret for socially destructive ends.

The debate was mainly about origins. Did magical thinking precede religious thinking or does it represent a decay of religious experience? Is magic "bastard science" based on childish ignorance and false premises? Is it a form of deception practiced by rogues and politicians? Why does belief in magic persist? Is magic an activity of individuals acting against society or is it a "collective representation," a projection of social ideology? What is the psychological basis of belief in magic? Can we distinguish the power of magic and the power of words? In what sense, if any, is the power of magic "real"?

Most of these questions were briefly surveyed in a celebrated (though, in my view, unsatisfactory) monograph published in the *Année Sociologique* for 1902-1903, *"Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie"* by Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss. This is O'Keefe's bible and sets the framework around which his book has been built. His reading on the subject extends almost to the present day, but his own theory is the Hubert/Mauss theory modified in some respects by the commentaries of Evans-Pritchard and his colleagues. The erudition is formidable but distinctly archaic.

MY PERSONAL DIFFICULTY with O'Keefe's book is one that would be shared by many of my anthropological colleagues. We feel that, with the passage of time, "magic," like "totemism," has become a nonsubject. The word has been so loosely used in so many different contexts that there is no longer even a family resemblance between the various different senses of the term. Moreover, those of us who have explored the various avenues of metaphor and metonymy opened up by the post-1962 writings of Lévi-Strauss are likely to feel that it is now a redundant category. Whatever anyone might want to say about "magic" could always be said more clearly by referring to something else.

O'Keefe is far from being naive about such matters, but he seems to think that the difficulties can be overcome if we distinguish "strict" and "weak" senses of magic. He seems to attribute the apparent confusion to the fact that anthropologists, sociologists, psychoanalysts, and experimental psychologists have different professional language traditions. But "magic" is part of the vocabulary in each case and, although the penumbra of meaning varies according to who is using the word, there is something "real" that the various specialists are all trying to talk about. O'Keefe categorically asserts the existence of this global reality in his preface. Thereafter his central purpose is to display what this real something is.

HE STARTS by breaking up the total field in which magical behavior can be discerned into seven "provinces": Medical Magic, Black Magic, Ceremonial Magic, Religious Magic, The Occult Sciences, The Paranormal, and Magic Cults and Sects. But from then on he takes it for granted that these various magics are all aspects of the same thing and proceeds to discuss magic as a general phenomenon in terms of a variety of theoretical approaches listed as thirteen "postulates," each subdivided into many cross-heads and sub-cross-heads. The treatment is encyclopedic but fragmented to the point of absurdity.

For example, Book Three carries the general heading "Individuals and Selves." This includes postulates 9–12. Nine: "Magic Tries to Protect the Self"; 10: "Magic Helped Develop the Institution of the Individual"; 11: "Magic—Especially Black Magic"; 12: "Magic Persists as an Expression of Certain Aspects of Civilization." No doubt this is very impressive as an exercise in erudition, but at the end of it all it does not seem to me that the reader is much the wiser. Some psychoanalysts said this, others said that. Some things that some psychoanalysts have said are consistent with some things that some sociologists have said. Others are not. So what?

Right at the end of Book Three there is a section headed: "Conclusion—A General Sociological Theory of Magic." It runs to just over five pages and seems to be intended as O'Keefe's own comment on his Labor of Hercules. It is a very small and undistinguished mouse of an argument. At this point our author abandons his economy of words and lapses into sociological jargon of the worst kind:

> In magic man expropriates symbolic operators from religion to survive its moral pressure and to dare to think and speak and act as individuals; but this theft embeds him in structures of domination and evil which still further mystify his religious representations and darken his understanding. Later, in legal-rational institutions, man constitutes communities again, but retains his self-determining spontaneity, and disenchants his world. But in time these institutions rigidify into lifeless bureaucracies and inquisitorial moral agencies which often become oppressive. As these devices successively slip in his hands, man substitutes one for the other; sometimes recourse to a religious or magical device is only temporarily regressive, like 'regression in the service of the ego,' and so man's capacities to reconstitute community through religion and to protect the self through magic are never given up.

I find this kind of gobbledygook entirely repugnant but that no doubt is a matter of taste. Shorn of its verbosity, the thesis that "religion" and "magic" are polarized on the same axis as "community" and "individual" is already to be found in the Hubert/Mauss essay of 1903 and, as we read on in O'Keefe's conclusion, it becomes apparent that the whole exercise has been set up in such a way it was bound to confirm this initial hypothesis. I am unimpressed.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH would reject both "religion" and "magic" as universal categories and confine the argument to the interconnections between three abstractions of a different sort: (1) aspects of human action which "do things," i.e. alter the state of the world out there; (2) aspects of human action that employ symbolic coding to "say things," both about the state of the world out there and about human relationships; (3) potency. The third of these categories is particularly ambiguous. It embraces both natural forces such as wind and water and human and animal muscular strength, which is the physical power through which men assert domination over "nature," and also the metaphysical social "power" by which men assert domination over one another. All the argument about "magic" spins around the fact that the exercise of human potency, in any form, always involves both the operational ("doing things") and the symbolic ("saying things") aspects of human action, and that it is not only difficult but quite impossible to make any clear-cut distinction between physical and metaphysical forms of potency.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Western scholars deeply resented this latter fact. Surely the advance of scientific knowledge meant that man's new control over physical

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potency must reduce his former reliance on metaphysical potency to childish superstition? O'Keefe, it would seem, is still of that persuasion. "Magic" is thus a term of abuse applied to forms of potency of which he does not approve. But for other types of scholars, the distinction between the rational and the irrational that this use of language implies is not one that can be applied to the practical circumstances of real life, and the category "magic" is therefore quite redundant. If we use the sort of criteria employed by Hubert and Mauss and O'Keefe, then I engage in a magical performance every time I go through the "rite" of making myself a cup of coffee.

O'Keefe's monster seems to me quite extraordinary, but I would rate its long term viability as zero.

EDMUND LEACH

Edmund Leach, author of *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Viking), is a fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

BRIEF REVIEWS

George Mills
by Stanley Elkin

(Dutton, 508 pp., $15.95)

"George Mills" is a character and condition—"blue-collar blood"—beginning with an eleventh-century English stable boy pressed into the Crusades, reappearing in the early nineteenth century when George IV sends George Mills the forty-third as courier to a Turkish sultan, and ending, the line now defunct, with a middle-aged St. Louis furniture mover who, like the George Millses before him, listens to the hardships of the rich and searches for an audience to tell "the sad intricacy of things," all the protocols and sorrows his blood knows.

"Because I never found my audience"—that's the reason Stanley Elkin's God in *The Living End* gives for destroying the world. Ironically, this 1979 fable of an artist's final revenge became Elkin's most widely read work, bringing his other (and often better) novels back into print. Now in *George Mills* Elkin has written—like his extravagant God, like a whole P.E.N. of gods—his most ambitious and best novel, but I'm afraid its wealth of tale-tellers and listeners, all squeezing their exchanges for some D.N.A. of voiceprint, may overwhelm an audience not already confirmed in Elkin excess.

ALL THE WORLD as occasion for words, situations devised to circumstance and celebrate the tongue: it's an ample notion, broad and generous and passionate but more hazardous for fiction than Tinker Creek for travel or jails for journalism, a method that has let Elkin's books fall through the crack of reputation between realists (Bellow, say) for whom words serve the world and experimentalists (say Barth) whose words construct a world. Perhaps not *George Mills*, for here Elkin cinches the circle of his practice tight: the energy and precision of his language make real, even necessary and instructive, its odd occasions.

The "range of the strange," as an earlier Elkin character put it, is unusual in this novel, even for Elkin: wholly fabricated and persuasive tales of medieval salt mines, Janissaries, and eunuchs, a blacksmith's bad luck in small-town Vermont, Astral Projection in Cassadaga, Florida, and in the book's present a travelogue of Mexican laetrile cures and a choreographed funeral. Performances nested in performances, the stories are frames and analogs for the final George Mills, childless at fifty-one, living with a bad back and a dumb wife in a white backwater of South St. Louis yet convinced he is "saved," not by religion but by his certainty that nothing will ever be expected of him.

A skilled remover of others' lives to dead storage, George too is stored in his salvation. But he finds himself drawn into the lives of the rich and educated, once again escorting a supposed better to a foreign land, and learning that he, every person's audience, wants someone—a sister he never had, maybe his own George Mills, or the rich who have "George Mills" lives beneath professions—to hear his blue-collar wisdom, the inherited knowledge of primal manners and deepest needs.

The St. Louis that envelops George Mills is daytime TV, the domestic melodrama of upscale sex and moneyed disasters. The lives are imposed on Mills by a minor novelist named Cornell Messenger whose costume-jewelry salesman father, like Elkin's, "compelled his arias," made him feel "obliged to take the stand from the time he had first learned to talk, there to sing, turn state's evidence, endlessly offer testimony, information, confession, proofs." Between Messenger's gossip and his own remembered adventure, two kinds of experience and perhaps two kinds of contemporary fiction, George Mills steers with humane resources to his conclusion, rather hap-

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lessly stated, that the point of life is "to live long enough to find something out or to do something well." George Mills is no artist, but his novel is high art, transformed like all of Elkin's books and sentences from the merely curious and sunken ordinary.

Elkin invents emotion. He sets up for wit and delivers instead some of the most moving scenes in contemporary fiction. They cannot be retold, but the means are no less than Faulknerian: the oral posing of alternatives, suspending resolution, spreading language to every corner of possibility, more suspension—then the brief, clean release of feeling. Still America's magnifico of metaphor, as well as alliteration, Elkin also remains a very funny man, adept at crazed monologue, goofy dialogue, and the exhaustive series. In *George Mills*, though, Elkin has powered his routines beyond comedy and beyond pathos to the emotional clarity that comes when the writer no longer worries about amusing and prompting his audience.

"George Mills" is a name for compromise. The novel does not. *George Mills* is a wonderful, grief-ridden, resisting, and finally—for Elkin—a pure book.

THOMAS LECLAIR

Thomas LeClair's *Anything Can Happen: Interviews with Contemporary American Novelists*, will be published in February by University of Illinois Press.

Beyond the Cold War: A New Approach to the Arms Race and Nuclear Annihilation by E. P. Thompson

(Pantheon, 198 pp., $15, $5.95 paper)

Take half a dozen opinion pieces, a pinch of learnedness, a couple of speeches and some old letters; put them between hard covers; attach a title like *Beyond the Cold War: New Approaches to the Arms Race and Nuclear Annihilation*. What you get is neither "new" nor a book. It is a potpourri of *haute* self-righteousness, flamboyantly served up by one of the better polemicists of our times—E. P. Thompson, a quondam social historian who is now better known as top guru of the British antinuclear movement.

Nuclear weapons are full of horrible paradoxes, and the peace movement on either side of the Atlantic has clearly been right in confronting the proponents and practitioners of deterrence with the grisly implications of their craft. How much *is* enough? How can you threaten to destroy the world in order to save it?

Yet E. P. Thompson's main purpose does not seem to be an earnest debate. His "new approach" is a particularly galling version of the old ad hominem method. Thus, the disciples of deterrence are engaged in an "intellectually-vacant pseudo-discipline." Respected strategists (such as the British scholar Laurence Martin whom Thompson attacks at great length) are "courtiers at Toad Hall." They are "well-funded freaks" with "infantile political views" who operate "on the basis of secondhand and contaminated data."

AND WHERE THOMPSON does deal with ideas (rather than skewering their proponents) he is neither original nor convincing. He attacks deterrence as something "which has frozen diplomatic and political process and has continually postponed the making of peace." Correct. The most profound transformation of postwar international politics is exactly the *sterilization* of diplomacy. Conflicts are no longer solved; at best they are muted or replaced by new ones. Yet why? Precisely because nuclear war is too horrible to contemplate, the great powers must now conduct their business without recourse to the *ultima ratio*. War can no longer be the continuation of politics by other means. For nothing is worth the price of total destruction.

Is that so bad? Ironically, Thompson would have us do away with the nuclear weapons that have kept the super powers on their best behavior for thirty-odd years. For a dove, this is a rather hawkish proposition. Presumably, Thompson would be far happier in a world where the great powers could behave as freely as the small ones—as in the Middle East, for instance, where Israel and the Arabs have fought five wars in thirty-four years.

Thompson, like most of his comrades-in-ire, has merely managed to score a shaky debating point by (illegitimately) shifting the burden of proof. Repeating a familiar litany, he has attacked nuclear deterrence as an "ideological lubricant of the arms race," as "astrology" (and hence unprovable), and as ultimate road to "terminal war." Perhaps he is right. But the burden of proof is still on him. How do we get out of this fatal maze? How do we keep the peace without nuclear weapons (even assuming that we could really get rid of them while retaining the knowledge to make them)?

Answers Thompson: "I am talking of a new kind of politics." That prescription echoes Jonathan Schell's bold dictum: "The task is nothing less than to reinvent politics." It is hardly a coincidence that both authors end up with a plea that merely conceals the circularity of their arguments. If we *could* reinvent politics, if we *could* solve our conflicts peacefully, we could do away with the weapons that threaten our existence. Yet we have these weapons because we live in nation states that have conflicts and hence an irreducible need for self-protection. To wish away the weapons betrays an obsession with symptoms that makes for good polemics but vacuous prescriptions.

JOSEF JOFFE

Josef Joffe is a senior editor of the West German weekly *Die Zeit*. He is currently on leave at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., where he is writing a book on the decline of relations between Europe and the United States.

CORRECTION:

Several typographical errors appeared in Adam B. Ulam's "Changing of the Guard" (TNR, December 6). The correct spelling of the name of Russia's prime minister is Nikolai Tikhonov; the year in which Brezhnev removed Nikolai Podgorny from the Central Committee Secretariat was 1967; and a sentence in the second to last paragraph should have read: "And if a genuine Sino-Soviet detente is *im*possible, can the U.S.S.R. afford to wait until China becomes a major industrial and hence nuclear power, as it is bound to become in time?"

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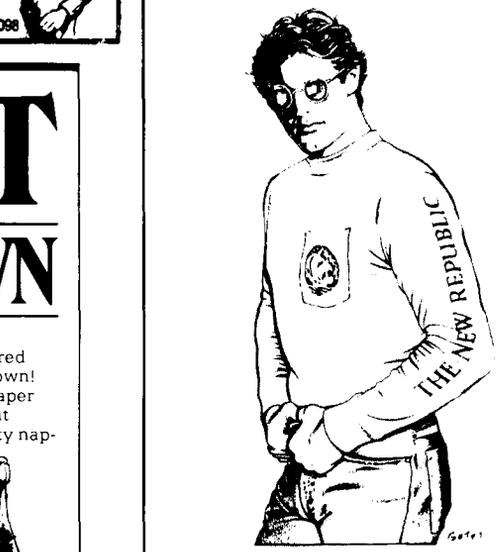

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JAPAN DIARIST

Just Like Home

JAPAN IS SMALL. That is the first thing I noticed when I arrived for a ten-day, five-city lecture tour. Even where the scale is monumental the effect is muted. The thirteenth-century Sanjosanjendo Buddhist temple in Kyoto contains 1,001 carved cyprus statues of the Buddha. The hall in which these statues are arrayed, however, is dark and narrow, more like a storage shed than the display chamber for one of the wonders of the world. The Buddhas look like props from a forgotten movie. The great Buddha of Nara, a city a few miles from Kyoto, stands over fifty feet high, a huge blackened bronze figure in the lotus position. But it fills the lovely wooden temple in which it is housed, to the disadvantage of both. The temple is dwarfed, the statue hidden. The visitor must gaze up at it from close range, as if peering at a skyscraper from its base. The masterworks of Japanese public architecture, in any case, are not the buildings but the gardens. They are beautifully laid out and carefully tended, giving them a delicate, lapidary look. They embody the Japanese aesthetic of carefully planned simplicity. The gardens demonstrate that "less is more" is a principle the Japanese followed long before it was taken up as the watchword of twentieth-century Western design. Their ability to make a little go a long way is seen, too, in their commercial success. The economic term for making more of less is productivity.

JAPAN HAS A GENEROUS supply of one thing: words. Japanese has fewer sounds than other languages, and so requires more and longer words to express the same ideas. It is different in other ways as well—in fact, in most ways. Since their language sets the Japanese apart from the rest of the world, communication with foreigners takes place in English. All Japanese know a little; they must study it for six years in junior and senior high school. Japanese television carries selected programs in English. "I learned English from 'Sesame Street,' " one tour guide told me. "Big Bird taught me well." On the last point she was wrong. With a few exceptions, I was struck by how poorly the Japanese speak English, even people like the guide, whose jobs required a working knowledge, even some who had spent several years in the United States. An American is hardly in a position to criticize others for clumsiness in speaking foreign languages, but the Japanese difficulty is striking because it is unexpected. Everything else that they need to do they do well. English is everybody's second language in Japan. There is no third. A Japanese colleague mentioned that a man from Peking whom I had met had lectured at his institution the week before. What language had he used? "English, of course."

IT IS SMALLER, the language is strange, but in most ways Japan looks like home. Aside from the Buddha, the most common statue I saw was of Colonel Sanders. Shopping in Osaka, the country's second largest city, for a T-shirt with a Japanese character on the front, I saw dozens, each one inscribed with *English* words: "DiMaggio, "NCAA," "Sheepdog," "Boston Celtics," and "Banana Tree Island." It was impossible to find one with a slogan, name, or message in Japanese. The best-preserved remnant of the distinctive Japanese past that I encountered was sumo wrestling. The sport's origins reach back before the beginning of the country's recorded history. The wrestlers are huge, blubbery men in colorful sashes tucked under and around them like giant diapers, who wear their hair in a top knot, samurai style. Also in samurai fashion, each has a retinue of handlers, belongs to a stable of wrestlers, and assumes a special sumo name that is handed down with the stable. When the combatants climb into the ring—a circle raised a few inches off the ground—they scatter salt crystals to purify it. They squat facing each other behind two parallel lines, stare, rise, stomp around the ring, return to the salt box, and repeat the ritual. Ultimately they lunge at each other, pushing, slapping, grabbing, and growling. The one who first touches the mat with any part of his body except his feet, or steps outside the ring, loses. Not all the rules and rituals of sumo have come from antiquity unchanged, however. There is a time limit within which the wrestlers must fight. Before it went into effect, the ritual—the men stomping around, scattering salt, and glaring at each other—could go on for hours, or so I was told. The fights themselves are short, but there are now enough of them so that each day's contests in a tournament can be put together to make a half-hour videotape, and shown later than evening. With its new rules, sumo, the most ancient of sports, turns out to be the one best suited for television.

JAPAN IS STRIKING to an American because it is so emphatically familiar *and* so foreign. Some of the differences pique the interest of the social scientist. A newspaper article told of a suspected criminal who threatened suicide when surrounded by police. His boss was summoned and talked him out of it. This, I thought, testified to the importance of the social relations in the Japanese workplace. In the United States the police would have called a family member, or a clergyman, or an authority on suicide prevention. Some of the differences are subtle, perhaps so subtle that they exist only in the eye of the beholder. Baseball is a national sport in Japan. The umpires appeared erratic by American standards, calling pitches inconsistently. What was a strike to one batter was a ball to another. True to the vaunted Japanese respect for authority, however, there were no arguments of the sort that would have erupted in an American ballpark. But some of the differences are impossible to miss. I glanced out the window of a tour bus parked near a museum and saw the driver of another bus assiduously polishing the metal letters on its front. The inside of the first letter was receiving special attention. Few people would notice the letters, fewer still would single out that one, and surely nobody would check its inner ring for dirt. Nevertheless the driver was scrubbing away at it furiously. Another American behind me called across the aisle to her husband, "Quick, Harry, get the camera. The folks back home aren't going to believe this."

MICHAEL MANDELBAUM

Michael Mandelbaum is the author of *The Nuclear Question: The United States and Nuclear Weapons, 1946-1976,* and *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics Before and After Hiroshima,* both published by Cambridge University Press.

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The cost of drunk-driving accidents amounts to over $24 billion every year in property damage, loss of wages, medical and legal fees. Not to mention the emotional pain to the victims' families and friends.

What is being done about it? Over the years, many different approaches have been tried: mandatory jail sentences, stiff fines, license suspensions, alcohol-rehabilitation programs, and higher drinking-age laws.

No single countermeasure seems to do the job by itself. Tough laws, unless they are supported by equally tough enforcement and the certainty of punishment, don't seem to work over the long run. Even with all three, probably the most effective single thing we could do is to examine our own attitudes about drinking and driving.

How much do you really know about the effects of alcohol? The facts may surprise you. For example, a lot of people believe that beer and wine are less intoxicating than other drinks. In fact, a can of beer, a glass of wine, or a 1½-ounce drink of 86-proof liquor are all about equally intoxicating.

A lot of factors determine how quickly you'll get drunk. Your body weight, how much you've had to eat, and the number of drinks you have over a specified time all make a difference. That's why it's so hard to know when you've had too much.

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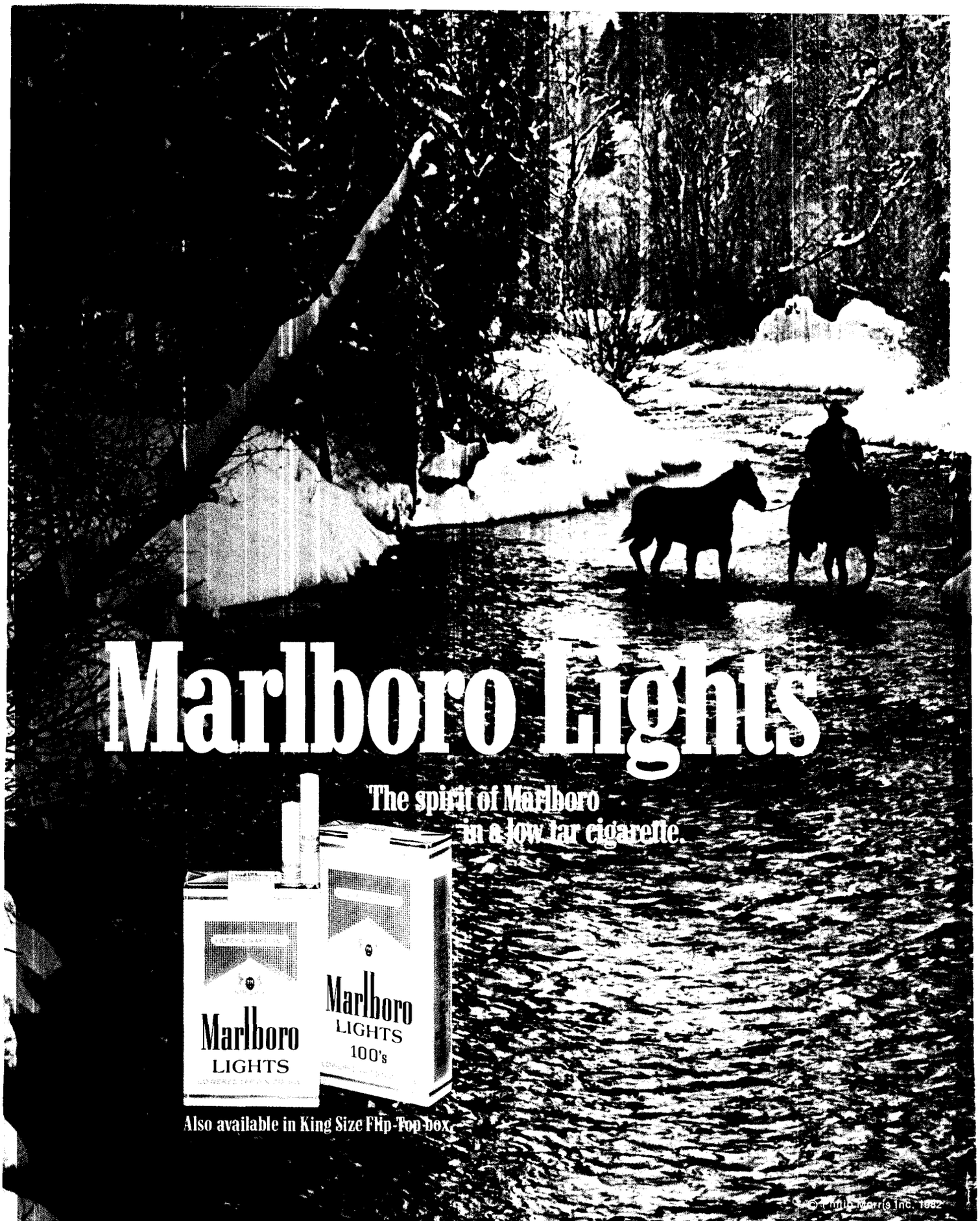

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